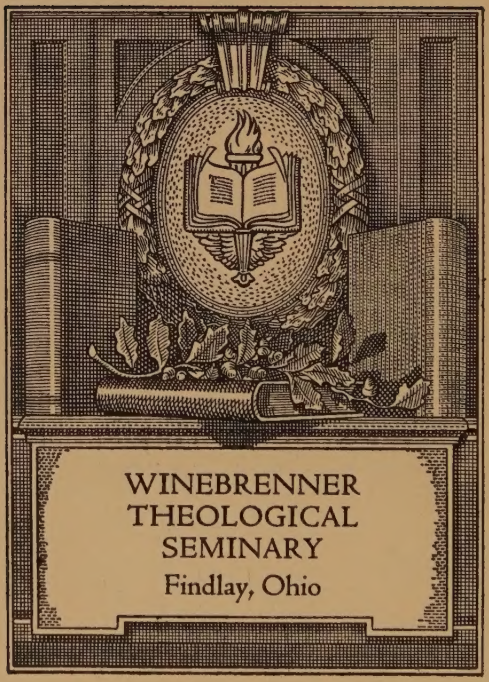
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THE FOURTH GOSPEL

ITS SIGNIFICANCE AND ENVIRONMENT

THE FOURTH GOSPEL

ITS SIGNIFICANCE AND ENVIRONMENT

BY

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PREFACE

It has been found necessary almost completely to rewrite the first edition of this book. This was inevitable owing to the changes and fluctuations of the problem of the Fourth Gospel during the twenty-three years that have elapsed since that edition was published. Further study has convinced me of the supreme value of this Gospel as an authentic interpretation of the self-consciousness of Jesus Christ, and of the contribution it makes to our knowledge of the events of His ministry, particularly of the story of the Passion. I have found it necessary to join the ranks of those who are convinced that the Gospel is essentially a literary unity, and have withdrawn my previous attempt to isolate certain portions as editorial revisions or insertions. The theory also, that in certain places the sequence of thought has been disturbed owing to dislocations caused by disarrangement of pages in an original codex, I find unconvincing.

I am deeply indebted to the Rev. T. Ralph Morton and to Mr. Arthur Rogers for valuable help in the correction of proofs.

R. H. Strachan.

Westminster College,
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LITERATURE

THE following books, among others cited in the text, are mentioned under these abbreviations.

Bernard *ICC. The Gospel of St. John* (International Critical Commentary) by J. H. Bernard, 2 vols., 1928.

Burkitt *GHT. The Gospel History and its Transmission* by F. C. Burkitt, 1906.

Drummond *CAFG. An Inquiry into the Chararacter and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel* by J. Drummond, 1903.

Gardner-Smith *SJSG. St. John and the Synoptic Gospels* by P. Gardner-Smith, 1938.

Hastings *DCG. Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, 2 vols., 1906-8.

Hastings *DB. Dictionary of the Bible*, 5 vols., 1898-1904.

Hastings *ERE. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 12 vols., 1908-21.

Hoskyns *FG. The Fourth Gospel* by Sir Edwyn C. Hoskyns, ed. F. N. Davey, 2 vols., 1940.

Howard *FGRC. The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation* by W. F. Howard, 1931.

Kennedy *PMR. St. Paul and the Mystery Religions* by H. A. A. Kennedy, 1913.

Kennedy *PCR. Philo's Contribution to Religion* by H. A. A. Kennedy, 1919.

Moore *JFC. Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* by G. F. Moore, vols. I-II, 1927; vol. III, 1930.

Odeberg *FG. The Fourth Gospel* by Hugo Odeberg, 1929.

SB. *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* by H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, 4 vols., 1922-28.

Scott *FG. The Fourth Gospel* by E. F. Scott, 1906.

Smith *HGHL. The Historical Geography of the Holy Land* by Sir George Adam Smith, 25th edition revised, 1931.

Streeter *FGG. The Four Gospels* by B. H. Streeter, 1924.

Taylor *FGT. The Formation of the Gospel Tradition* by Vincent Taylor, 1933.

LITERATURE

The following books, most of which have appeared since this book was revised, should also be mentioned.

C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 1955.

R. Bultmann, *The Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols., Eng. tr. 1952, 1955.

C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 1953.

G. H. C. Macgregor, *The Fourth Gospel* (Moffatt New Testament Commentary), 1928.

E. B. Redlich, *Introduction to the Fourth Gospel*, 1939.

J. N. Sanders, *The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church*, 1943.

Vincent Taylor, *The Gospels*, 1930.

W. Temple, *Readings in St. John's Gospel*, 2 vols., 1939-40.

Studies in the Fourth Gospel, ed. F. L. Cross, 1957.

Special mention should be made of the new (fourth) edition of *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretations* by W. F. Howard, 1955, which has been revised by Dr. C. K. Barrett. He has added a supplement which mentions recent writers on the Gospel up to 1953, and also contains a valuable account and criticism of Bultmann's, C. H. Dodd's and Hoskyns' interpretation and discussion of the Gospel.

The Mishnah, to which reference is made in the text, consists of authoritative Rabbinical interpretations of the written Law (practically identical with our canonical Old Testament), up to the end of the second century A.D. Later in date than the Gospels, the Mishnah nevertheless preserves many religious ideas and directions current at the beginning of the first century. The best and most recent translation is by H. Danby. The commentary by Strack and Billerbeck, as yet untranslated, cites masses of extracts from Rabbinical literature up to the end of the fifth century A.D. As well as from other Jewish sources, these are richly drawn from the Mishnah and also the Talmud. The latter, in its Palestinian and Babylonian forms, is an extensive commentary on the Mishnah, which is itself a commentary. It is evident that in spite of the Hellenistic colouring of the Fourth Evangelist's thought, he has preserved the historical rabbinic background in his gospel.

When Philo is quoted, reference is made to the Loeb Classical Library edition of his works, where the Greek text is given with an English translation.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL

CHAPTER I

THE PORTRAIT OF JESUS, AS COMPARED WITH THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

1. In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus is represented as completely in touch with the ordinary daily life of men and women. We might reconstruct from the scenery forming the background of His parables, a vivid picture of everyday life in Palestine. In this Gospel the Good Shepherd (x) and the True Vine (xv) are not without their background of real life, but we miss the toilsome journey of search in the wilderness, the sheep on the shoulder of the shepherd, the rejoicing friends and neighbours. There is no vinedresser to intercede out of his gardener's heart, for the withered branch, that it should not be cut away (Luke xiii. 8). God is the vinedresser who either prunes or destroys. The vineyard on the Galilean hillside has become a symbol of Divine discipline and judgment. There are no pictures of a farmer sowing his seed, of a housewife baking bread, of a merchant seeking the finest pearls, of a ploughman suddenly turning up buried treasure, of mothers bringing their children. Where are the publicans and sinners? Where are the sick and suffering folk laid at Jesus' feet? 'Sir, come down ere my child die' is the one life-like cry of distress, straight from a human heart (iv. 49).

2. In the Johannine narrative there is no development in the recognition of Jesus. He is recognized as Messiah by the little group of disciples from the beginning. The Baptist speaks of Him as a later Christian might speak. He is 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world'. From the first, Jesus is the 'Son of Man' who 'came down from

heaven', and must be 'lifted up' or crucified for the salvation of men (iii. 13-15). In the Synoptic Gospels the disciples' acknowledgment of the Messiahship of Jesus culminates in the confession at Caesarea Philippi. In Mark viii. 30 the disciples are forbidden even then to announce the Messiahship, because they have not yet learned to associate the discharge of Jesus' Messianic office with suffering and death (*vv.* 31-33). The only remonstrance on this point, in the Fourth Gospel, comes from 'the people' (xii. 34), not from Peter, although the disciples do attempt to dissuade Jesus from His final journey to Jerusalem (xi. 8).[1] The confession of Peter is described in terms that differ from the Synoptic account (vi. 66-69), although it is placed in approximately the same historical setting as in the Synoptics—after the feeding of the multitude and the close of the Galilean popularity. There is no mention of the actual Baptism of Jesus, none of the Temptation in the Wilderness, nor of the Transfiguration. The institution of the Lord's Supper is omitted in chapter xiii. The agony in Gethsemane is not described, although there are traces of the story in xii. 27, xviii. 11.

3. Comparison has frequently been made between the Johannine conception of the *miracles* of Jesus, and the Synoptic. John[2] speaks of the miracles as 'signs' (*sēmeia*, iii. 2); in the other three Gospels they are spoken of as 'acts of power', 'mighty works' (*dynameis*, Mark vi. 5 and frequently). Sometimes John speaks of them as 'works' (vii. 3). What does he mean by speaking of them as 'signs'? We gain the impression from the Synoptic Gospels that Jesus was always unwilling to work miracles as mere displays of Divine power. When He healed, or fed the multitude, or stilled the storm, it was because He was 'moved with compassion', or by a desire to help His frightened disciples. The Synoptic miracles appear to be spontaneous acts of love and power. The motive of love is not absent in the Fourth Gospel, but it is subordinated to a higher motive, the manifestation of the

[1] Here and throughout the Farewell Discourses (xiv-xvi) the disciples are represented as unaware that death is the climax of the Messianic vocation. The remonstrance in xi. 8 is not based on Messianic grounds.

[2] Where the Evangelist is thus referred to, apostolic authorship is not implied.

Divine 'glory' (xi. 4, 5. See note on 'Glory', pp. 103ff.). Prevailingly the miracles in this Gospel are regarded as evidential. They prove that the omnipotent power and love of God are manifested in Jesus (v. 36). Most of the Johannine miracles are wrought on inanimate objects (water into wine, multiplication of loaves, walking on water). The conditions of others are heightened. A man has been ill for thirty-eight years (v. 5), *born* blind (ix. 1). Lazarus has been dead four days (xi. 17).

We must not, however, exaggerate the difference between the Synoptic and the Johannine conception of miracle. In Mark also miracles are evidential. The narrative of Mark ii. 1-12 is clearly intended to demonstrate the Divine personality of Jesus (*vv.* 7, 10). The miraculous draught in Luke v. 1-11 produces 'amazement'[1] in the disciples, and a confession of sin on the part of Peter (*v.* 8). In Mark ii. 12 the people 'glorified God' (cf. John ii. 11). One remarkable characteristic of the Fourth Gospel is the omission of miracles of exorcism (cf. pp. 86, 162ff.). This class of miracle is described in Mark and the others in such a way as to bring out the unique Divine personality of Jesus. Mark lays stress not only on exorcism, which was practised by other Jewish healers (Matt. xii. 27), but on something unique in the exorcisms practised by Jesus. There is an element of the 'numinous' in them. The healing of the demoniac in Mark v. 1-20 produces an acknowledgment of the Divine Messianic person of Jesus from the demon-world itself, in the person of the demoniac (*v.* 7). The Gadarene populace come out to see what has happened. They saw the wild demoniac 'clothed and in his right mind', and Mark adds that 'they were afraid'. They also besought him to depart out of their neighbourhood, which was a dim pagan recognition that Jesus possessed uncanny powers, and that with Him further contact might be dangerous. In the Marcan account, the exorcism has a quality and the story a tone which are peculiarly Christian, and distinguish it from similar Jewish healings. The former demoniac becomes personally attached to his Healer and will not leave Him. This 'faith' element here and in all the healings of Jesus is

[1] *thambos*, a sense of supernatural power; Mark ix. 15, Acts iii. 10.

a new note, not found in similar pagan and Jewish stories.[1] The man is bidden go to his own people, and tell them what 'the Lord' had done for him. The title is the highest Christian name for the exalted Christ (Phil. ii. 11). He goes away and begins to publish (or 'preach') 'how great things Jesus had done for him', and 'all men did marvel'. These exorcisms of Jesus are so baffling to the religious authorities that He is charged with 'black magic'. The charge is sternly repelled. The 'finger of God' is in what He does (Luke xi. 14-20). Matthew introduces immediately after the saying the accusation of blasphemy against Jesus' opponents (xii. 31, 32). Whatever the original form of the Synoptic stories, there is clearly in their present form the conception that the miracles of Jesus are evidence of the power of God at work in and through Him. In Mark also, the miracles are 'signs'. It is, moreover, incorrect to say that in the Johannine Gospel it is the miracle that induces faith, while in the Synoptists faith precedes the miracle. In both, there appears a faith that precedes the miracle, and a faith that follows it (Mark iv. 40f.; ix. 23f.; John xi. 26). The Fourth Evangelist, seeing in the miracles manifestations of the Divine personality of Jesus, only completes on a larger scale what is begun in the Synoptics. While it is true to say that in the Johannine miracles the motive of compassion recedes into the background, it is equally true that even in the Synoptic miracles something much deeper than the compassionate sympathy of Jesus is hinted at.[2] In all four Evangelists theological reflection on the significance of miracles is evident. They are intended to bring men into the presence of God's gracious and powerful activity in the person of His Son, and actually have that result. Some believe and some disbelieve; and unbelief is culpable and involves judgment. (Matt. xi. 20-24; Luke x. 12-15.)

4. In the Johannine Gospel strong emphasis is laid on the true humanity of Jesus. He sits 'wearied by the well', and

[1] A typical Jewish story is related by Josephus, A. viii. ii. 5. There the technique of the healer is magical, and the purpose of the story is to magnify the power of the spells at his disposal. No personal bond is forged between healed and healer. Cf. Taylor *FGT*, pp. 126ff.

[2] Cf. R. H. Strachan, *The Fourth Evangelist*, Chapter V.

is both hungry and thirsty (iv. 6-8). He weeps at the tomb of Lazarus (xi. 35). He asks a question (vi. 5). This is in line with the emphasis on His true humanity in 'the Word became flesh', or in xix. 34, 35 (see notes). On the other hand, it is noticeable that each of the first three citations is followed by a statement which equally emphasizes His Divine personality. When the disciples return with the food, they find that His hunger has been mysteriously satisfied (iv. 31-34. See exposition). Jesus weeps at the tomb of Lazarus, but the tears are doubly misunderstood (xi. 36, 37. See exposition). It may also be noted that the prayer of Jesus at the grave is interpreted in no merely human terms (xi. 41, 42. See exposition). In vi. 5 Jesus' question is not as in xi. 34, for information, but to prove Philip; 'he himself knew what he would do'. Jesus is in possession of resources that are superhuman. Similarly, His knowledge of men is superhuman (ii. 24, 25). The Evangelist thus qualifies His emphasis on the humanity of Jesus by emphasizing equally His divinity. There is no elaborate theological reflection. The two aspects of His personality—human and divine—are naïvely set side by side. This is in accordance with the whole conception of the person of Jesus in this Gospel. It must, however, be admitted that there are moments when the Evangelist's conception of the Divinity of Jesus is allowed to modify his insistence on His true humanity (see p. 194). On the other hand, alongside the insistence that Jesus and the Father are 'one' (x. 30. See notes), there is a frequently repeated insistence on the complete dependence of Jesus upon God, who *delegates* the divine power which is apparent in the miracles (xiv. 10 and frequently). The same conception is more generally expressed in Matt. xi. 27, 'All things have been delivered unto me of my Father', where the emphasis is not on 'all things' but on 'delivered'. The *Logos*-Christ is no Divine Being masquerading as a man. He is both *Logos* and *flesh*.

5. The Divinity of Jesus, as also in the First Epistle, is never stated in the form of a dogma. It is His humanity that is stated dogmatically in an anti-docetic interest (p. 43). The real human personality of Jesus is the spear-head of the Evangelist's message. Jesus is a Divine Being who has become

truly man, the *Logos* made *flesh*. (See the exposition of vi. 52ff.) The portrait of Jesus in this Gospel is a theological interpretation of the human life, based on actual traditions of the life and ministry of Jesus.

In this connexion one passage in the first chapter (i. 50, 51) deserves earnest attention. It is the key to the Evangelist's whole conception of Jesus. Nathanael has become a disciple in response to the Divine insight with which Jesus has penetrated to his inmost thoughts. He makes his confession of faith (i. 49). *Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.* (R.V.) The reply is introduced by a promise of a vision of *greater things*, and by *verily, verily*. The double *verily* (lit. 'amen') is in this Gospel always an indication that the saying which follows is of fundamental importance (cf. iii. 3, 5, 11). *Ye shall see the heaven opened*, in Greek, means 'opened and remaining open'. The saying here foretells to Nathanael the nature of the Christ who will be revealed to him in the course of the ministry about to be inaugurated. The Evangelist is at the same time telling his readers what to look for in his portrait of Jesus. The personal pronoun in *Greater things than these shall ye see* is in the plural.

The story of Jacob's dream at Bethel (Gen. xxviii. 12) underlies the words. Two points deserve to be noted: (1) *Son of man* is substituted for 'Jacob'. (2) The *angels of God* are seen ascending and descending *upon* the Son of man, who thus becomes the ladder of the original vision which is set up between heaven and earth.

(1) The use of the term *Son of man* as a title of Jesus at once links up the Johannine tradition with the Synoptic, where 'Son of Man' is the term used by Jesus to express His own interpretation of Messiahship.[1] It is impossible here to

[1] The interpretation of the title as used by Jesus is important. The literature on the subject is wide. Amongst recent literature reference may be made to Rudolph Otto, *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man* (E.Tr.), pp. 176-255; Vincent Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice*, pp. 21-32; T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 211-236.

enter fully into the history of the term. In the Daniel vision (vii. 13) 'one like unto a son of man' is the symbol of the Jewish nation, so long oppressed by the heathen kingdoms, Babylon, the Medes, Persia, Greece. *Daniel* was written during the supremacy of Antiochus Epiphanes, who provoked the Maccabean revolt (167 B.C.). The vision is intended to encourage the oppressed Jewish nation. The various heathen oppressors are symbolized by terrifying wild beasts, the winged lion, the devouring bear, the four-headed leopard, the mysterious beast with ten horns. All these are overthrown, and Israel is brought before the throne of God, symbolized by a purely human figure, a 'son of man'. 'He appears unarmed and inoffensive, incapable through any power of his own of making himself master of the world. . . . If ever he is to be master of the world, God must make him so.'[1] To this figure like a 'son of man' is given dominion and glory and a kingdom which shall be world-wide, and cannot be destroyed. In this Daniel passage we have the key to the New Testament conception of the Kingdom of God on the lips of Jesus;[2] also to His application of the term 'Son of Man' to Himself.

It is unnecessary here to discuss whether Jesus derived the personal title from the Daniel vision, or from the later Book of Enoch (lxx, lxxi), where the term 'Son of Man' evidently denotes an individual of superhuman dignity and power, not the nation as in Daniel. It has become personalized. That Jesus in His use of the title had the Daniel vision in His mind is certain from His words in Mark xiv. 62. The self-consciousness of Jesus, however, cannot be interpreted 'from the libraries of His time'. The important point to note is His fundamental originality in combining the title Son of man with the figure of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah liii, where the reference is to the Suffering Nation. 'The Son of man must suffer' is the refrain that runs through every use that Jesus makes of this title. There is no indication that the term was ever applied, in the popular mind of His day, to

[1] Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*, p. 242. The term *son of man* is originally an equivalent in Hebrew for 'man' (Ps. viii. 4). 'Son of' means 'sharing the nature of': cf. 'son of Belial', 'son of perdition' (John xvii. 12).

[2] See pp. 130f.

the Messiah. Thus He made use of a title which preserved both the significance of human weakness and dependence upon God, and of supernatural dignity and power, realized in the suffering of the Cross.[1] Such an interpretation of Messiahship was mysterious and strange both to the populace and to the disciples, but it preserved His conception of Messiahship from contamination by nationalistic and political conceptions. In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus uses the title in a cryptic way. Its meaning could only be expressed in deeds, not wholly in words. Jesus never expressly says, 'I am the Son of Man'. Yet the reference is clearly to Himself. In the Fourth Gospel, while the title Son of Man is always conjoined with the idea of triumphant suffering and death as the prelude to the Messianic throne, it also retains the emphasis on the true humanity of Jesus. Here is a further indication of the fidelity with which the Evangelist adheres to the primitive Christian tradition. In the Epistles, the title disappears, presumably because it would have been unintelligible to the Hellenistic mind. In the Synoptic Gospels it appears only on Jesus' own lips. The Fourth Evangelist is the first to interpret it for a Graeco-Roman world.

In the vision of i. 51 'Son of Man' is substituted for Jacob. Frequently in the Old Testament 'Jacob' is a name, not for the individual but the nation, composed of his descendants (Ps. xiv. 7; Is. xiv. 1). The 'Kingdom' or sovereignty of God is conferred upon the nation, symbolized by 'one like unto a son of man' in the Daniel vision. The promise to Nathanael is that the disciples will see the Kingdom of God, typified by the ascent and descent of the angels of God upon Jesus, revealed in the human life of the Son of Man. The Son of Man is no longer the nation, but Jesus Christ himself. All the promises and purposes of God once believed to be fulfilled through His chosen instrument, the nation of Israel, are now realized in the person and mission of Jesus Himself. In no other Gospel is the profound origin-

[1] The name, however, is used of Messiah in *Enoch* xlvi. 2ff. There is no evidence that the title was used of Messiah by ordinary people in Christ's day. In the Synoptic Gospels, the title may in some cases have replaced 'I' in oral transmission, but the majority of instances cannot be so explained; cf. Luke vi. 22 with Matt. v. 11.

ality of Jesus' conception of Himself as Son of Man so clearly displayed. He, and He alone, is God's agent and instrument. He gathers up into His own person and ministry the 'Kingdom of God', the sovereign will and purpose of God. In His person and ministry these are already being realized (Luke xi. 20; x. 23f.), and will be communicated after His death and resurrection (Mark xiv. 62). The statement, 'the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of an only-begotten from the Father) full of grace and truth', is the summary expression in the Johannine idiom of the same conception. The Sovereign purpose of God —the Kingdom—is realized in the incarnate Son.

(2) The words 'the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man' are very interesting.[1] Here, the Son of man is conceived as the ladder set up between heaven and earth, in His own person. The 'angels' associated with the 'coming' of the Son of man in conventional apocalyptic (Mark viii. 38, etc.) are the agencies of the Divine sovereignty, trafficking, through the person of the Christ, between heaven and earth. Thus is the sovereign power and love of God made available to Jesus, and through Him to men.

The thought here owes a great deal to Jewish mystical interpretation of Jacob's vision. In the *Wisdom of Solomon* (x. 10) it is written, 'when a righteous man (Jacob) was a fugitive from a brother's wrath, Wisdom guided him in straight paths; she shewed him God's kingdom, and gave him knowledge of holy things'. Dr. Odeberg draws attention to certain midrashic interpretations of Gen. xxviii. 12 which are of great interest.[2] There were rabbinical discussions regarding the meaning of the Hebrew word *bō* in this verse. Does it mean 'on him', or 'on it' as in our translation, 'on Jacob' or 'on the ladder'? There can, of course, be no doubt as to the

[1] In what follows, I am deeply indebted (as elsewhere) to the exposition of Dr. Hugo Odeberg, a Swedish scholar writing in English. See his *The Fourth Gospel*, pp. 33-42. This writer opens up a rich field of rabbinic thought, in its bearing on the Fourth Gospel. His Mandaean parallels, however, have little bearing on Johannine interpretation, as further research has shown. (Cf. Burkitt, *Church and Gnosis*, pp. 100ff.)

[2] Cf. Odeberg, *The Fourth Gospel*, 33ff. Montefiore and Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology*, 885. Burney, *Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 115.

original meaning. The Hebrew *bō*—in Gen. xxviii. 12—means 'on it'; but it might equally well be translated 'on him'. On this mere grammatical point the rabbis supported the idea that there were really two Jacobs. One is here on earth, the other is his heavenly counterpart. One is Jacob as he is: the other as God means him to be or to become. The sleeping of Jacob is also interpreted in a mystical sense. He sleeps because he is not roused to the sense of his high destiny. The angels of God attempt to awaken him by descending *on him*. 'They ascended on high and beheld his image, they descended on earth and found him sleeping.'[1] This actual interpretation is attributed to Rabbi Yannai, who belonged to the first half of the third century A.D., and there can therefore be no question of literary affinity with the Fourth Gospel; but Jewish mystical speculations of this kind may well have been in existence much earlier[2] in which the figure of Jacob in the dream story represents the nation of Israel. The midrash just mentioned makes use of Is. xlix. 3, 'Thou art my servant Israel, in whom I will be glorified'. The comment is '"Thou"; that is said in the sense of thy image which is engraved on high.'[3]

If the saying in i. 51 is influenced by a midrashic interpretation of Jacob's dream, it means that the Son of man now becomes the ladder of humanity set up for ever between heaven and earth. The Son of man is He who wakens humanity out of its 'sleep', its natural inability to enter into the upper world where God is (cf. xi. 11 and Eph. v. 14). Heaven is opened, and 'heaven' is the place where God's throne is. Jesus in the flesh is an inhabitant of both worlds. The disciples see even in Christ on earth the divine 'glory' (ii. 11). They will also share it (xvii. 22). The Son of Man with 'all the holy angels' has already come to earth. We

[1] Quoted by Odeberg *FG*, p. 34.

[2] The influence of the Platonic conception of the upper world of reality as against the lower world of sense did influence later Jewish thought; but it is only the form in which the essentially Jewish idea of the particular providence of God is clothed. All man's ways are directed by God (Ps. xxxvii. 23). This providence is very intimate. 'Even the hairs of your head are all numbered' (Matt. x. 30). Cf. Moore *JFC* i. 385.

[3] On Jewish mysticism, see the article *Mysticism* (Jewish and Hebrew), Hastings *ERE*, ix. 108-113.

have in i. 51 a key to the whole portrait of Jesus in the Gospel. The wide open heaven, and the ascending and descending angels symbolize the whole power and love of God, now available for men, in the Son of man. Similarly Jesus is *the Way, the Truth and the life* (xiv. 6) and the *Door* (x. 9). We miss in this Gospel the realistic picture of the Friend of sinners, and of a Teacher whose parables are a mirror of the everyday life of men and women. On the other hand, we may overlook in the other Gospels the picture of Jesus who continually lived and spoke as One who was in unbroken communion with the Father, and in obedience to the will of God regarded the calling of sinners as His supreme divinely appointed work on earth. All those to whom the Father's love and power were thus made real would recognize their new experience of forgiveness as the answer to the question of the Johannine Christ, *Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?* (xiv. 10).

6. The contrast is marked between the treatment in the Fourth Gospel of what is known as *Eschatology*, or the doctrine of the Last Things,[1] the future consummation of the Kingdom of God, and its presentation in the Synoptic Gospels. All readers of the Gospel must have noticed that instead of those vivid chapters, in apocalyptic style, which in the Synoptics (Matt. xxiv. 4-36; Mark xiii. 5-37; Luke xxi. 8-36) are inserted immediately before the Passion narrative, we have as their counterpart in this Gospel chapters xiv-xvi. That Jesus used the language of apocalypse is plain. The imagery is preserved in the Fourth Gospel and in the First Epistle (v. 28f.; vi. 40, 44; 1 Ep. ii. 18; iii. 2). These utterances are not merely fragments of the Synoptic tradition of His words, alien to the central thought of the Fourth Gospel and retained by the Evangelist because he found them, as it were, insoluble in the crucible of his own interpretation of the Second Advent. They are integral expressions of his own faith. At the same time, in this Gospel the eschatological teaching of Jesus is mainly found transposed into another

[1] 'Eschatology' means the 'doctrine of the End'; i.e. the 'End' conceived, according to Jewish thought, as God's age-long or final purpose, to be realized in the future.

key. The prevailing emphasis is upon the promise that His coming will be realized in His continued presence with the disciples after the resurrection; indeed is already a real factor in His ministry on earth. Jesus 'came from God and went to God' (xiii. 3). His human life has an advent 'glory' (i. 14).

We have already seen that in i. 51 a reminiscence of the words of Mark xiv. 62 can be detected. Yet in the Synoptic Gospels Jesus does not speak of His 'coming' only in the language of apocalyptic imagery. The absence of detailed imagery such as we find in the language of the inter-testamental apocalyptic books and even in the prophets (Is. xi. 1-9) is a feature of His apocalyptic language. The Fourth Evangelist is sometimes regarded as having transmuted the apocalyptic teaching of Jesus into a more spiritual form; as teaching that the presence of the Spirit is the consummation of the Kingdom of God. Certainly his thought is expressed in the Johannine idiom, but it is also the thought of Jesus Christ. Jesus himself transmuted the futurist eschatology into the present, and saw in His own ministry and mission the Kingdom of God as present and active (Luke xi. 20; Matt. xiii. 15f.). Similarly the mission of forgiveness and power to the outcast, equally with the expulsion of demons, is likened by Him to the final gathering of guests for the great Messianic feast, out of the highways and hedges (Matt. xxii. 9; Luke xiv. 23). The Messianic feast is a traditional representation of the consummated 'Kingdom' in the new age yet to come. In the mind of Jesus that Messianic feast is already prepared here and now in His own mission. In reply to the Baptist's question, 'Art thou he that should come?' Jesus points to the activities of His present human ministry (Matt. xi. 4-6= Luke vii. 22, 23). The Fourth Evangelist develops in his own idiom the conception that 'the Kingdom of God is in your midst' (Luke xvii. 21 R.V.m.).

The prevailing emphasis in this Gospel on the present manifestation of God's glory in the person of Jesus, does not mean that the futurist eschatological hope has decayed because the Christ has not returned in as short a space as men expected. Eschatologically, the thought of the Fourth

Evangelist is not so far removed from the outlook of the primitive church as has been assumed. No doubt in dark days of persecution, the longing and hope of a speedy advent flared up into vivid expectation. Men asked, 'Where is the promise of His coming?' 'How long, O Lord! How long!' It is, however, a mistake to think that the primitive church, notwithstanding the place which the Second Advent takes in Paul's earlier preaching, continually lived in an atmosphere of tense expectation of the final Parousia. Only once in the account of the earliest Christian preaching which Luke gives us is the Second Advent of Christ set forth in any detail (Acts iii. 20, 21), and once Jesus is referred to as Judge 'of the quick and the dead' (Acts x. 42). 'That it is implied in the whole *kerygma* (gospel message) is true, but the emphasis does not lie there. The main burden of the *kerygma* is that the unprecedented has happened: God has visited and redeemed His people.'[1] The emphasis in the New Testament everywhere, including the teaching of Jesus, is upon the tremendous significance of the new life and power that has entered the world as a final and decisive act of God, the mystery revealed, 'hidden from all ages and generations'. A passionate conviction on this very point throbs in the words, 'The Word became flesh' (i. 14). 'Come and see' is a formula used in apocalyptic writings, and is used also by the Johannine Christ as He invites the disciples to enter into His company (i. 39). The earlier apocalypses promised a complete transformation of existing natural and social conditions that would accompany the coming of the Lord. Jesus promised no such world, where all adverse conditions would have disappeared. The Fourth Evangelist has preserved a real aspect of the eschatological teaching of Jesus when He says to those disciples who are the nucleus of the Church, 'In this world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world' (xvi. 33).[2] In the Johannine version of the teaching of Jesus, the present quality of salvation is emphasized (iii. 16-21; v. 24-26; xii. 44-48) along-

[1] C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching*, p. 70. Cf. *History and the Gospel*, p. 151.

[2] Cf. p. 185 *infra* n.1.

side the doctrine of the final Advent (xvii. 24; v. 27-29), when He will return to bring His own to the Father. Paul believes that the 'Kingdom' is already present in the 'earnest of the Spirit' (2 Cor. i. 22; v. 5), and this will culminate in the vision 'face to face' (1 Cor. xiii. 12). The Fourth Evangelist has still further developed Paul's teaching and grounded it on the teaching of Jesus. He reinterprets the consciousness of Jesus. Jesus had moments of intense feeling which were also moments of penetrating vision. It is in these moments that He used apocalyptic language most of all (cf. Mark ix. 1). Recall His words to the returning Seventy in Luke x. 18, and compare them with John xii. 31, 32; or xiv. 30; or His warning to Peter in Luke xxii. 31-34, and the form it takes in John xiii. 36-38. Although this Evangelist still cherishes the hope of the Second Coming, and even in the First Epistle talks of it as imminent (ii. 18), yet in general the apocalyptic imagery and the future glory of a dramatic interposition from heaven have disappeared. At the same time, the hope expressed by the Early Church in its belief that Jesus would return in power and glory, is not regarded by the Fourth Evangelist as fully satisfied in the present experience of Christ through the coming of the Spirit (cf. v. 25-29; 1 Ep. ii. 18).

CHAPTER II

THE DISCOURSES

JESUS' manner of speaking in this Gospel is very different from the style of His Synoptic teaching. It is also remarkable that practically the whole Gospel is written in the same style. The Baptist talks like Jesus in iii. 27-36. Verses 16-21 are a comment and reflection of the Evangelist on what has gone before, and they are written in precisely the same style as Jesus or the Baptist employs. Moreover, this style is the same as we find in the First Epistle of John. This monotony of style indicates that the Evangelist does not merely record, but interprets the teaching of Jesus as we know it from the Synoptic Gospels, imposing on it a characteristic Johannine idiom. This habit confronts us with a major problem in the study of the Fourth Gospel.

The teaching of Jesus appears in this Gospel in the form of long discourses which at first sight are in startling contrast with the brief, concise, pithy sayings that characterize the speech of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels. These discourses are lengthy. Their thought is articulated. They contain many references to His own person and His relationship to God. God is always referred to as 'the Father'. The thought has a habit of repeating itself. The mind of the Speaker hovers round the same idea. Single themes ('light', 'life', 'believing', 'witness', 'glorify', 'truth') are meditated upon in one long discourse. The thought is approached from different sides. Jesus' own words and the Evangelist's commentary on them can often scarcely be distinguished.[1]

Notwithstanding, the habit of ignoring this Gospel as a source for actual sayings of Jesus leads to serious misappre-

[1] On this whole subject see the illuminating chapter in Howard *FGRC*, pp. 215ff.; W. Temple, *Readings in St. John's Gospel*, pp. xiiiff.

hension of its value for faith. If we examine closely these Johannine discourses, we shall find that they are full of the same terse, paradoxical sayings as characterize the speech of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels.[1] Many both direct and indirect parallels to Johannine sayings can be found in the Synoptic Gospels (e.g. iii. 19; iv. 44; v. 8, 17; xii. 25ff.; xiii. 16, 20; xiv. 31; xv. 20). The themes of the 'Vine' (xv. 1-11) and the 'Shepherd' (x. 1-21) are also familiar in the Synoptic Gospels. There can be no doubt whatever that the Fourth Evangelist bases these discourses on actual recorded words and thoughts of Jesus. There is evidence that Jesus did teach His disciples to memorize His words, and that He sometimes deliberately cast them in a longer rhythmical form, more easily to be remembered.[2] Note the poetic form and rhythm of Matt. vi. 19-34. But Jesus, unlike the Rabbi, put no embargo on interpretation. The scholar of the Rabbi was expected to memorize his teaching and to reproduce it *verbatim*. It was a pupil's highest commendation that he was 'a plastered cistern that loses not a drop'.[3] Jesus often spoke in paradox or in some other way that would provoke thought. In this Gospel, the 'Spirit' is regarded as teaching the disciples and giving them freedom to shape and interpret the records both of His words and life according to the needs of their hearers (John xvi. 13, 14). Jesus calls His disciples 'not slaves, but friends' (xv. 16), which applies to mind as well as to will. Luke's preface to his Gospel already sounds that personal note which marks the possession of a certain freedom and plasticity of thought on the part of an individual writer in relation to traditional material, and achieves its finest result in the Fourth Gospel. Interpretations are made of words of Jesus even in the Synoptic Gospels. Instances can easily be collected by noting the interpretations made of Mark's version of sayings of Jesus by Matthew and Luke (e.g. Luke xxi. 20; Mark xiii. 14). If there is a difference of idiom as between the sayings in the Fourth Gospel and in

[1] An exhaustive list of examples will be found in Drummond *CAFG*, p. 16. Cf. Howard *FGRC*, pp. 218ff.

[2] Cf. T. W. Manson, *Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 50ff.; Burney, *The Poetry of Our Lord*, pp. 63-96.

[3] Mishnah, *Aboth* ii. 8 (Danby).

the Synoptics, it must be remembered that Jesus originally spoke in Aramaic, and that in translation there would necessarily emerge varieties of expression. There was no uniform 'authorized' translation into Greek of the words of Jesus (cf. Mark x. 15, Luke xviii. 17, with Matt. xviii. 3, 4, and the phraseology of John iii. 3).

The Evangelist opens these discourses, and prefaces the sayings with the words 'Jesus said'. In this connexion we should remember that the writer is a Jew and thinks as a Jew, while he writes in Greek.[1] In Aramaic as in Hebrew the construction known as indirect speech (*oratio obliqua*) does not exist. A Jew did not write, 'And it was told Solomon that Adonijah was afraid of him', but 'And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold Adonijah feareth King Solomon' (1 Kings i. 51). Thus if the Evangelist desires to record words of Jesus, the only form natural to him is to begin, 'Jesus said', even when his own style and manner of thinking are imposed on the words.

At the same time a much deeper conception is at work. When a Hebrew prophet used the expression, 'Thus saith the Lord', he did not usually mean that these actual words were heard by him with the outward ear, although he may have had 'auditions'. He meant that he spoke with certainty and authority the mind of God on a particular situation. Whatever the prophets said, they felt to be the direct expression and outflow of knowledge received from God (e.g. Is. vi. 9; vii. 3). They were equipped to distinguish between their own impressions and thoughts, and what they derived directly from the inspiration of God[2] (cf. 1 Cor. xiv. 32). The prophet might equally well have said, 'This is the will of God'; 'This is the mind and purpose of God'. The Fourth Evangelist feels himself to be in the same relation of communion in the Spirit with the exalted Christ as the Old Testament prophet experienced with God. He knew the recorded words of Jesus, but the Jesus who speaks is not the historic Jesus. He is the risen and ascended Lord. The Evangelist is conscious of the

[1] This is much more probable than the idea that the original Gospel was written in Aramaic, and afterwards translated.

[2] Cf. Schultz, *Old Testament Theology* i. 272; T. H. Robinson, *Prophecy and Prophets*, pp. 44f.

presence in his heart of the Spirit promised by Jesus, who will lead the disciples into *all the truth*, and *will not speak from himself* (xvi. 12, 13). The Old Testament prophet reflected on the actual situation presented to him and prayed for the assurance that he is about to utter what is really God's word (Jer. xlii. 2, 7). Similarly, the Evangelist has deeply reflected on the sayings (as well as the recorded deeds) of Jesus, and believes that he is in these discourses uttering the mind of Jesus.[1] 'The writer himself probably could not have told us in the case of the longer speeches that this was said in the flesh, and that in the spirit, nor did he care to make such an analysis. Christ was always speaking these things to his listening soul, and what did it matter if he had not heard these precise words in Palestine, when they came to him straight out of the heart of the Beloved? We, too, may well withhold our hands from the seamless robe.'[2] These words of Ignatius may also be quoted: 'Now there is one teacher, who spake and it came to pass: yea and even the things which He hath done in silence are worthy of the Father. He that truly possesseth the word of Jesus is able also to hearken unto His silence.'[3] The form of the discourses in the Fourth Gospel may also be illustrated by the practice of Philo. Philo regarded the Pentateuch as inspired in every detail, yet when he is narrating, for example, God's instructions to Moses and warning Pharaoh (Exod. iv. 11) he expands and interprets the discourse, with the Exodus passage as his text.[4]

Nor must the possibility be excluded that the Fourth Evangelist has preserved in greater measure than the Synoptic writers, a more mystical form of utterance employed by Jesus Himself. The saying in Matt. viii. 20 does not apply to the physical homelessness of Jesus, but means that, although 'Son of Man' He is without a home in the hearts of those to whom He came. He is an uncrowned King (cf. John i. 11). The mystical saying of Matt. x. 40 is repeated in John xiii. 20. The outstanding Synoptic analogy is found

[1] See also the discussion on the Farewell Discourses, pp. 271ff.
[2] Drummond *CAFG*, p. 41.
[3] *Ephesians* 15.
[4] *De Vita Moses* i. 84. Cf. Kennedy, *Philo's Contribution to Religion*, p. 50.

in Matt. xi. 27-30. The thought of this passage appears in various parts of the Fourth Gospel (v. 22-27; xiv. 13; xvi. 15; xvii. 2). The term 'the Son' appears in v. 19-26; vi. 40; viii. 35f.; xiv. 13; xvii. 1. The reciprocal knowledge of Father and Son is described in x. 15, 30, 38; xvii. 21, 25. The idea of the revelation of the Father, through the Son, permeates the Johannine discourses. If there was not this mystical[1] element in the consciousness of Jesus, it is difficult to account for even its scanty appearance in the Synoptic tradition. It is now generally agreed that Matt. xi. 27ff. (Luke x. 21, 22) is reminiscent of the utterance of 'Wisdom' in Ecclesiasticus li. 23-24 followed by the invitation of *vv.* 25-27 (cf. Ecclus. li. 1, 10-12, 17; xxiv. 19-22; vi. 24-25). When Jesus thus expresses His own self-consciousness in terms of personified Wisdom, it is a considerable step on the road towards the utterances of the Logos Christ in the Fourth Gospel.[2]

Jesus very often uses the 'I' style of speech in the Fourth Gospel. In view of the fact that these 'I' sayings (particularly in the form 'I am', vi. 35, xi. 25, etc.) have been often interpreted as assimilations of Hellenistic religious usage by the Johannine writer, it is important that we should not lose sight of the much more important and much more relevant analogies in the Old Testament and the Wisdom books. 'I am' is the accent of Divinity in the prophetic writings (Is. lii. 6; cf. xliii. 25; li. 12). The same style of speech is found in Revelation, on the lips of the risen Christ (e.g. i. 8, 17). The Book of Revelation contains many hymns and utterances which evidently belong to the earliest Christian Worship. The 'I am' would be as appropriate on the lips of some Christian prophet, conducting the worship of a Christian community and speaking in Christ's name, as it is on the lips of an Old Testament prophet speaking on behalf of God. In the Fourth Gospel the words of Jesus are the words of God (iii. 34). If we allow that the prophetic consciousness is a

[1] 'Mystical', not in the technical sense, but meaning that the relationship of the believer to Christ is not one of pure obedience, but one that suggests interpenetration of personalities. God speaks and Jesus utters (iii. 34).

[2] Cf. on the relationship between the Wisdom and Logos conceptions in Hebrew thought, pp. 92ff.

strong element in the personality of the Fourth Evangelist,[1] would he in attributing this 'I am' style to Jesus, be taking an unwarrantable liberty with that lofty self-consciousness which speaks in Matt. xi. 27ff. or in Mark xiv. 62? Is he not interpreting actual words of Jesus? Even if the words 'I am the bread of life' never actually 'ruffled the air of Palestine' in that particular form, Jesus did take bread and break it, and gave to His disciples, saying, 'This is my body'; in other words, 'This is myself' (pp. 192f.). The benefits of what He is about to do in laying down His life are to be appropriated by them. The teaching of the parable of the Lost Sheep is summarized in the claim, 'I am the Good Shepherd'. As we hear Jesus say in Matt. xi. 27, 'Neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him', do we not hear as an overtone, 'I am the Way'; i.e. the way to God? It is impossible, however, to be dogmatic regarding the verbal authenticity of these 'I am' utterances in the Gospel. That they are in the prophetic style does not decide whether Jesus also actually spoke in this form, or whether the Evangelist speaks thus in His name, as the Old Testament prophet spoke in the name of God. Both suppositions are probably true.

The 'I am' form of speech is the appropriate language of deity both in the Hermetic books and in magical papyri[2] (pp. 73ff.). The whole conception, however, of the speaker and of the worshippers' relation to the deity is different. Most often these 'I am' utterances of pagan deities, thus written down, are no more than a charm recited by the worshipper. By repetition of it he identifies himself with some potent deity, and thus vanquishes the 'demons' who threaten him. Of Hellenistic religion we may say what Augustine said of Plato and the rest. 'No man sings there . . . "Of Him cometh my salvation". . . . No one there hears Him call, "Come unto Me all ye that labour."'[3] Some-

[1] Cf. pp. 275ff.

[2] Part of a pre-Christian Isis inscription reads as follows: 'I am Isis, Queen of every land, instructed by Hermes. What I have laid down as law, no man can unmake. . . . I am the first who has brought the fruits of the earth to men.' See Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, third edition, pp. 134ff.; Bernard *ICC* cxviiff. The forms of Isis worship would be familiar in Ephesus.

[3] *Confessions* VII. XXI.

times 'I am' appears in the Fourth Gospel without any predicate. Occasionally the predicate may be supplied from the context; but there are other instances which are reminiscent of the Divine language in Deut. xxxii. 39; Is. xliii. 10; Is. xlvi. 4; cf. John viii. 24, 58; xiii. 19. These utterances are usually followed in the Old Testament by the assertion of the uniqueness of God, 'And there is none other beside me'. The uniqueness consists in the fact that God alone is the Deliverer of His people. In the Johannine texts just cited, this meaning is conveyed. Jesus speaks the language of Divinity.

The discourses of this Gospel often take the form of a controversy. It is noticeable that while the opening matter of dispute between Jesus and His opponents may be such a question as the Sabbath, the dispute very soon passes into a controversy regarding the person of Jesus Himself, and His Divine claims. The nature and subject matter of these controversies have been cited in order to represent them as either freely constructed debates which reflect a later stage of theological development in the Church, or are themselves accounts of contemporary debates between Christian and Jew. It is contended that Jesus would not thus argue regarding His own person and mission. 'The natural sympathy of the non-Christian reader must go time after time with the Jews. There is an argumentativeness, a tendency to mystification, about the utterances of the Johannine Christ which, taken as the report of actual words spoken, is positively repellent. . . . It is inconceivable that the historical Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels could have argued and quibbled with opponents as He is represented to have done in the Fourth Gospel.'[1] These words describe an impression which ordinary readers of the Gospel may themselves have had, notably after reading viii. 12-59. On the other hand, Abrahams, a very distinguished Jewish scholar, records this opinion: 'My own general impression, without asserting an early date for the Fourth Gospel, is that the Gospel enshrines a genuine tradition of an aspect of Jesus' teaching which has not found a place in the Synoptics.'[2] Abrahams bases his statement on the fact that

[1] Burkitt *GHT*, pp. 227f.
[2] *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, p. 12.

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subjects which emerge in discussion—Manna (vi. 31, 49), Water-drawing at the Feast of Tabernacles (vii. 2, 37-39), the Sabbath (v. 1of.; ix. 16)—are either suggested by the scriptural readings for the occasion which so often is one of the great feasts, or centre around fundamental Jewish doctrines like the Sabbath, which the action of Jesus had challenged. Freedom of teaching in the Synagogues followed by discussion was granted to Jesus (John xviii. 20; Mark i. 39). Burkitt himself admits that the Sabbath discussion in chapter v moves on lines quite consistent with contemporary historical fact.[1] There can be little doubt that the controversies are based on records of disputes between Jesus and the scribal authorities in the synagogues of Palestine, and also reflect the Church's later controversies with Jewish opponents.[2] It should also be remembered that in this Gospel the scene of the ministry is largely laid in Jerusalem, where contact with the ecclesiastical authorities would be frequent.

The vital question regarding the essential historicity of these synagogue discourses centres around the question whether Jesus Himself is likely to have discussed His own person and Divine origin with opponents. We dare not answer in the negative. Even in the Synoptic Gospels Jesus makes Divine claims which provoke theological controversy. He forgives sins, which is a Divine prerogative (Mark ii. 5-10). He is 'Lord of the Sabbath' (Mark ii. 28). As an interpreter of the sacred Torah, He exercises sovereign rights; deepens its provisions, selects, and adds to its content. 'But I say unto you' (Matt. v. 22, etc.). He is greater than Solomon, the ideal representative of Divine Wisdom (Luke xi. 31), greater also than Jonah, as representing the prophetic tradition (Luke xi. 32), greater than the Temple, which enshrined the ancestral Jewish faith (Matt. xii. 6). All these are Divine claims. We cannot summarily dismiss the idea that Jesus even in His lifetime was the subject of Christological controversy. It is true to say that Jesus does not ask men to accept His own estimate of His person and work simply on

[1] *GHT*, pp. 239ff.
[2] Drummond *CAFG*, pp. 35ff.

the ground that He makes these verbal claims. He educates His disciples into a perception of them, waits for their own discovery of them. 'Whom say ye that I am?' Note also His cryptic and allusive use of the title Son of man (pp. 6ff.). On the other hand, it would be strange if Jesus, who was so supremely conscious of a Divine mission and of a unique filial relation to the Father, had remained silent when that mission and filial consciousness were denied and opposed; strange also if the Saviour of men should not, as He does, solemnly warn men against calling the goodness of God, represented in His own mission, evil—thus blaspheming the Holy Spirit (Mark iii. 29). This latter saying must have been uttered in an atmosphere akin to the tense and even fierce atmosphere that surrounds some of the Johannine controversies. Moreover, it is necessary to recall that most of these controversies take place in Jerusalem, where the scribal opposition and manner of disputation would be most strident and evident. There Jesus would, more than anywhere else, meet them, as He could do, on their own ground, and even employ their own methods against them (e.g. vii. 15, etc.).

There is, however, no evidence that the Fourth Evangelist ever merely transcribes the traditional material with which he works. He is not concerned merely to give *verbatim* discourses delivered in these ancient synagogues. These dialogues and discourses with Jewish opponents must also reflect the situation, when the earliest Christian preachers met their Jewish opponents in the synagogues of the Diaspora in Ephesus and elsewhere in Asia Minor. Each discourse in the Fourth Gospel is limited to an historical incident. Here is reflected the habit of the Christian preacher or teacher, who would take an historical incident, such as the healing at Bethesda, tell the story partly in his own way, and make it the subject of a discourse or the occasion of a discussion. He might employ words and thoughts of Jesus which had another historical setting altogether. Nor were such discourses confined to the synagogue audiences. Sometimes, like Paul, the preachers were driven out of these, and spoke to Gentile audiences. In the first century A.D. there were many whose religious structure had collapsed, and who

sought a new religious basis on which life could be built.[1] Itinerant preachers and directors of the spiritual life—Stoic, Cynic, Christian—went out through city and countryside, like wandering friars, a kind of Salvation Army ready to meet (and, alas, sometimes to exploit to their own material advantage) the new longing for some religion with a universal appeal, simple yet profound enough to satisfy the cry for personal salvation (*sōteria*) which went up everywhere in that Graeco-Roman world.[2] The salvation sought for was too often for deliverance from material ills, yet pathetically so. Then, as now, man rebels against the notion that he is merely a member of a social organism, or a mere blind instrument designed by Nature to further the ends of the State. Among these wandering preachers were the Christian missionaries. As we read these discourses in the Fourth Gospel, we are reading what must have been partly shaped into their present form by the fact that they were once addressed to audiences, whose eager faces looked up into the face of a speaker, whose thirsty hearts received the living water. The Evangelist has given a certain literary shape to what was once material of this kind. Much of this Gospel was spoken, before it was written down. In it we may have a good deal of material employed by the Evangelist himself in his work as a Christian teacher. It is probable that the form of these discourses, including the Christological controversies, was determined largely by the historical situation in which he himself moved and taught.

In seeking to estimate the share which the Evangelist's own mind has taken in the presentation of these discourses, there is one particular direction in which contemporary literary forms are suggestive. Philo, as we shall see later, supplements and expands certain Divine utterances in the Old Testament (e.g. Exod. iv. 11f.).[3] Philo is really adapting a method of interpreting the Sacred Scriptures which was

[1] See the passage in *Stoics and Sceptics* by E. Bevan, p. 92.

[2] A vivid description of these wandering preachers and spiritual directors is given by S. Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius* (Book III, Chapter II). Cf. Lucian, *The Double Indictment*, tr. Fowler, iii, p. 148.

[3] See p. 34; also I. Abrahams, *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, p. 181.

practised in the synagogues when the Scriptures were read. The Old Testament Hebrew language was no longer spoken by ordinary people. Aramaic was the vernacular tongue. It became customary for the reader to translate the text into the vernacular. Ezra was traditionally regarded as the inaugurator of the practice (Neh. viii. 8 R.V.m.). This translation was called a *targum*. The *targum*, however, was often more than a translation. Sometimes it became an interpretation of a homiletic or explanatory character, for which another name was *midrash*, a kind of expository preaching. The Fourth Evangelist's presentation of these long discourses is in line with the practice of the *targum*, which was intended to make intelligible to the minds of the synagogue worshipper the words of Scripture.[1] Jesus is represented as giving a *targum* on words of Isaiah in Luke iv. 16ff. The Evangelist regards the words of Jesus as manifestations of the Divine Logos (xvii. 8), as well as His deeds. He seeks to expound the meaning of Jesus' recorded words. Once or twice he uses a remarkable word for Christ's sayings. He calls them *paroimiai* (x. 6; xvi. 25, 29). The word is translated 'proverb', which is an attempt to render in English what *paroimia* stands for—the Hebrew *mashal*. This Hebrew word can mean both a terse proverbial saying like those of which the Book of Proverbs is a collection, and also what we know as 'parable', or even 'riddle'. We are also reminded of the interpretations of Jesus' parables which occur in the Synoptic Gospels (e.g. the Parable of the Sower, Mark iv. 2ff.). It is certain that some of these interpretations are the work of Christian teachers, and have found their way into the record of Jesus' sayings.[2] As 'giving the sense', like the *targum*, they were regarded as utterances of the Lord. There is every probability that Jesus did interpret His own teaching to His disciples, and in the Fourth Gospel also He is so represented (vi. 60ff.; xiv. 4ff., etc.).

[1] The elaborate rules to be followed by the targumist are detailed in the Mishnah, *Megillah*, 4 (tr. Danby, pp. 205ff.) It is unlikely that all these were obligatory in New Testament times. Cf. Moore *JFC* i, p. 303.

[2] It is still a matter of dispute among scholars whether any of these interpretations come from Jesus Himself, or are the interpretations of later preachers or teachers. See C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, 13ff. and *passim*; W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Gospel Parables*, 39f.; B. T. D. Smith, *The Parables of the Synoptic Gospels*, 199f.

In the latter, Jesus is often misunderstood, and even His own interpretation fails to produce understanding (viii. 30f.; xvi. 31f.; cf. xii. 30-34 and Mark vi. 52). As in Mark iv. 11, the 'Kingdom' has its mysteries or secrets, known only to the disciple. In the Fourth Gospel the disciples are represented as remembering the words of Jesus and believing; i.e. understanding them only after the Resurrection, under the guidance of the Spirit (ii. 22).

CHAPTER III

THE EVANGELIST'S CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

It is commonly assumed that the Fourth Evangelist was acquainted with the Gospel of Mark and probably with the Gospel of Luke,[1] while there is no trace of his being acquainted with Matthew. This assumption has lately been re-examined by Mr. P. Gardner-Smith,[2] who brings forward an impressive case against it. He points out that it rests almost entirely on verbal parallels. The chief instances are the phrases 'spikenard very costly', 'three hundred pence', and the saying 'the poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always,' in Mark xiv. 3-9, exactly reproduced in John xii. 1-8. On the other hand, these phrases, of which the first includes a term 'spikenard' (lit. 'pistic nard') not found elsewhere in Greek, might easily become stereotyped in an oral tradition, which John and Mark use independently of one another. A stronger case for John's knowledge of Mark's Gospel is based by Professor C. H. Dodd on the result of a comparison of John vi. 1–vii. 10 with Mark vi. 31–x. 1. The journey to Jerusalem (Mark x. 1) is identified with that in John vii. 10 (cf. 'he would not that any man should know', Mark ix. 30, with 'not openly, but as it were in secret', John vii. 10). Also the order of events in the Johannine section is said to be dependent on the order in Mark.[3] Johannine narrative also includes elements from the tradition of Martha and Mary (cf. Luke x. 38-40; John xii. 2), and also a remark-

[1] See Streeter *FGG*, pp. 393-426; Howard *FGRC*, pp. 142ff.

[2] *Saint John and the Synoptic Gospels.*

[3] *Expositor*, October 1921, pp. 286ff. The weight of the argument depends on the fact that in this section Mark combines two accounts of the same journey (vi. 34–vii. 37; viii 1-26). The contention is that the Fourth Evangelist is apparently indebted to both accounts. Originally these were variants of the same tradition which Mark combines in his Gospel. If it is proved that the Fourth Evangelist uses both, is he likely to have done so unless he had found them already combined in a written gospel?

able reminiscence from the story of the unnamed woman in the house of Simon the leper.[1] It is quite possible to explain the community of language between John and the gospels of Mark and Luke by assuming that the coalescing of traditions took place in the course of oral transmission. The whole question raised by Mr. Gardner-Smith is too complicated to be dealt with here adequately, but in the exposition numerous references to this important treatment of the literary relation of the Johannine Gospel to the Synoptics have been made. The general position taken up by the present writer is that a very convincing case has been made out for the hypothesis that the Fourth Evangelist had access to a collection of written sources, parallel to and cognate with those employed by Mark and Luke. In many cases the same stories had assumed somewhat different forms as compared with the forms taken by the stories in the Marcan and Lucan sources. Moreover, if the Gospel of Mark was accessible to the Fourth Evangelist, and was read by him, it may also be assumed that it was known and read in the Church at Ephesus. Is it therefore likely that the Evangelist would be able to find acceptance in the same Church for an account of Jesus' ministry so different from the Marcan? Or if he did, would it not cause serious confusion? In one important respect this Evangelist has contributed to our knowledge of the environment of Jesus' ministry. The Evangelist lays nearly the whole scene of the ministry in Jerusalem, not in Galilee as in the Synoptic story. That there must have been a larger and longer ministry in Jerusalem than is elsewhere related is practically certain. Of this fact there are indications in the other Gospels. Scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem come to attend on the Galilean ministry (Luke v. 17; Mark iii. 7; vii. 1). Judas was a native of Kerioth in Judea (Iscariot= *ish Kerioth*, 'man of Kerioth'). Joseph of Arimathea resided in Jerusalem, and his friendship with Jesus has to be explained. The intimacy with Martha and Mary points to frequent visits to Bethany. We have also the 'How often' of Matt. xxiii. 37, Luke xiii. 34, which points not merely to unfulfilled desire, but to baffled effort. It is well nigh im-

[1] See notes on John xii. 1-8 for a fuller treatment of these questions.

possible to explain the attitude of the authorities and certain incidents of the closing days, unless by the supposition of previous visits to Jerusalem. This concentration on the Jerusalem ministry might seriously confuse Marcan readers.

This Evangelist has also a conception of the history of Jesus all his own. Origen held that in the Gospel narratives generally we have not always pure history, but that there 'are inserted and interwoven things which cannot be admitted historically, but which may be accepted in a spiritual signification'.[1] Elsewhere, commenting on John ii. 12, he says that scripture writers unable to speak the truth 'at once spiritually and corporeally' (i.e. literally) 'made it their purpose to prefer the spiritual to the corporeal, the true spiritual being often preserved in the corporeal falsehood, as one may say'.[2] The 'corporeal falsehood' was, so Origen thinks, permitted by the Holy Spirit which inspired the writers. Origen has had modern followers among interpreters of this Gospel.[3] For example, the story of Lazarus in chapter xi, it has been suggested, is a 'corporeal falsehood', created by the Evangelist. It is suggested by some that he took material from the Lucan story of Martha and Mary, and from the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. The latter ends with the words 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rose from the dead' (Luke xvi. 31). By an act of creative artistry, he thus fashioned the story of the raising of Lazarus in order to teach the spiritual truth of the victory of Jesus, who is 'the resurrection and the life', over the grave. The result is a story symbolic of the truth that even although a convincing demonstration of Jesus' power were given, it would only harden men's hearts against Him, unless they had first yielded to the moral suasion of His appeal for faith in Himself and His Divine mission. The symbolic meaning of the Lazarus story cannot be denied. It would, however, have very seriously incapacitated the Evangelist's polemic against the Docetists (pp. 43f.) had he thus been in the habit of creating wholly imaginary in-

[1] *De Principiis* iv. 16 (E.Tr. Crombie, p. 315).
[2] *Commentary on John* x. 4
[3] Cf. Drummond *CAFG*, pp. 63f.

C

cidents and representing them as actual happenings during the ministry. Moreover, is this hypothesis consistent with the Evangelist's treatment of Lazarus? R. L. Stevenson speaks of his characters, which he had created, 'rising up and walking away from him'. That is psychologically correct, but to apply this phenomenon in the mind of the novelist, to the attitude of this Evangelist towards his characters, lands us in psychological inconsistency. It would involve us in regarding every other mention of Lazarus in the Gospel (xi. 1, 2, 5, 11, 14, 43; xii. 1, 2, 9, 10, 17) as references to a fictitious character, side by side with historical characters like Martha and Mary and Judas. In what form the Lazarus story came to the Evangelist in his source, we have no means of knowing, but there is every reason to believe that he regarded it as historical fact. Behind the story as told in chapter xi, there lies a story of raising from the dead, like the Jairus story or the Widow's Son at Nain.[1] The Evangelist obtained his material out of the traditions available to him, rewrote it, and even recast it, for the sake of its symbolic possibilities. Yet historical fact is important to him, inasmuch as his basic conviction is that Jesus came in the 'flesh', and lived an actual human life.

It is impossible to reproduce the original form of the story of this, or indeed of any other of the stories of Jesus, as it first encountered the Evangelist's mind. Mark reproduces his stories mainly as they came to him in popular tradition, either oral or written, or as he had heard some of them fall from Peter's own lips, and mostly records them as he received them.[2] These stories and dialogues also show artistry, but it is the spontaneous artistry of the popular tale, and belongs naturally to them. In the Fourth Gospel, we are compelled to distinguish between the tradition as the writer received it, and his own presentation or interpretation of it, which is consciously creative.[3]

When we speak of the Evangelist's interpretation of the stories about Jesus, as a *theological* interpretation, we must

[1] See pp. 240f.
[2] Cf. Rawlinson, *Gospel of Mark*, pp. xviiif.
[3] Cf. Taylor *FGT*, pp. 163ff.

not view him as we would a theologian who deliberately read into the narrative a dogmatic conception embodied in the creed of his church. The process is much more subtle and artistic. Before he ever began to write, he had meditated and reflected upon the traditions of Jesus' ministry, which he possessed. He has a memory for events over which he has brooded. These emerge in the Gospel as an inextricable blend of historical recollection and interpretative reflection.

> What first were guessed as points, I now knew stars,
> And named them in the Gospel I have writ.[1]

Like Wordsworth, he draws his material from 'hiding-places ten years deep'.[2] The Evangelist has brooded over the materials available to him. 'The painter's explanation applies here also. It is the truth told lovingly. . . . Fresh radiance came into view as he gazed, fresh delight, fresh hope for men; but it was love which thus cleared the vision.'[3]

The writer has indeed had a rich and deep Christian experience. He has known what it is to be 'born from above'. Moreover, he owed a very deep debt of gratitude to a fellow-believer whom he several times speaks of as the 'Beloved Disciple'.[4] That individual is indubitably John, the son of Zebedee. Some of the stories may well have come to the Evangelist at first hand, or as records of the Apostle's own teaching and preaching. Nevertheless, the Gospel owes its essential form and style to the writer's capacity for imaginative reflection. 'The materials he uses have all been fused in the crucible of his creative imagination, and it is from the image in his mind's eye, far more vivid than the written page, that he paints his picture.'[5] Further, he is conscious that the Spirit is guiding his mind, in accordance with the promise of xvi. 12-14. 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all the truth. . . . He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you.' We must not be afraid to say

[1] R. Browning, *A Death in the Desert.*
[2] *The Waggoner.*
[3] W. M. Macgregor, *Repentance unto Life*, p. 141.
[4] See further on this title, pp. 82f.
[5] Streeter *FGG*, p. 397.

that in this Gospel, some unknown genius has, for the first time in the literature of our religion, both consciously and unconsciously used his God-given power of artistry to fashion a portrait of Jesus and His ministry, suitable to the needs of the contemporary Graeco-Roman world and for the expression of his own faith. His own faith, which is the faith of his Church, is his inspiration.

This inspiration often takes the form of remarkable dramatic expression. The dramatic element is very apparent in the stories of the Woman of Samaria (iv. 1-42), the Man born Blind (ix. 1-38), the Raising of Lazarus (xi. 1-46), the Trial before Pilate (xviii. 28–xix. 16). These stories can be arranged in a series of scenes, which together make a brief drama.[1] There is an artistic restraint in the depiction of these situations. The strokes of the brush are few. In the story of the Man born Blind, an unusual number of characters are introduced, as compared with the Marcan stories, where, as a rule, there are only Jesus and an interlocutor, rarely a third party, and sometimes a vaguely defined group or crowd. This paucity of characters is a mark of the popular tale. On the other hand, various characters appear in the Lazarus story. All this is evidence that the literary mind of the Evangelist has been at work on a tradition transmitted to him in simpler popular form.

In this Gospel there is an apparent lack of interest in the details of the historical setting. This seems a strange thing to say of a gospel where there are so many exact notes of time, such as mention of the day and the hour when something occurred; where exact numbers are given (ii. 6); which mentions the boy who supplied the food which was miraculously multiplied, and that the loaves were *barley loaves* (vi. 9); the name of the man whose ear Peter injured in the garden (xviii. 10). These may be touches preserved from his sources. On the other hand, the Evangelist often suddenly ceases to be interested in the character he has introduced. Nicodemus appears in order to interview Jesus, and after a verse or two disappears out of the narrative. We are not told the result of the conversation. Certain Greeks ask to see

[1] Cf. Taylor *FGT*, p. 164, and the Exposition.

Jesus (xii. 20), but we are not told of the interview or its result. Instead, their presence is made the occasion of a discourse on the significance of the Cross. The writer's supreme interest is in ideas, not in persons. A remarkable exception appears in his accurate knowledge of the inner motives which directed the arrest and trial of Jesus (pp. 84f.).

The whole Gospel indeed is conceived as a drama of the Logos Christ. Paul also conceived the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus dramatically. 'Christ cancelled the regulations that stood against us—all these obligations He set aside when He nailed them to the Cross, when Christ stripped off from Himself the (demonic) principalities and powers, and exposed them to all the world ('openly' R.V.) for what they are, and triumphed over them in the Cross' (Col. ii. 14, 15). Compare Phil. ii. 5-11. There the Redeemer from heaven, the Son of God, descended to earth, humiliated Himself, suffered willingly even the death of the Cross, and was exalted as Lord. In this Gospel, the cosmic drama is transferred from heaven to earth. It appears not only in the Cross, which is its climax (xii. 31). The whole ministry is a conflict with unbelieving enemies under the categories of Light and Darkness, Truth and Falsehood, Life and Death, Belief and Unbelief. The Evangelist is affected by the pathos, as well as the magnificence of the spiritual antagonisms that emerge between the Incarnate Logos and the 'world', which He made. The Logos does not become flesh merely in order to provide material for theological reflection. That life on earth is a drama; something done, accomplished, 'finished' for men. Jesus gives His 'flesh' for the life of the world. The whole ministry on earth is the manifestation of Divine reality or 'Truth', active in the person of Jesus who is the Truth (xiv. 6). At the same time the terms 'drama' and 'dramatic' must be applied with a certain reserve. The chief Actor is God, the Father, Who controls the whole movement. The theme of the 'hour' determined by God pervades the whole. The 'hour' strikes at the Crucifixion (xiii. 1). There Jesus is not 'alone', but the Father is still with Him in action, fulfilling His supreme purpose. The controlling conception of the

Gospel narrative is that what is being done on earth, represents what is being done in Heaven.

Along with this dramatic form given to events, we are made to feel that not only sayings, but narrative is recorded in such a way that, of itself, it is made to convey a deeper significance. For example, from the pierced side of the body of Jesus on the Cross *there came out blood and water* (xix. 34f.), and the phenomenon is solemnly attested as having deep spiritual significance. 'Siloam' is explained as meaning 'sent' (ix. 7). The miracle at Cana has clearly a symbolic significance. Judas goes out to betray Jesus, and 'it was night' (xiii. 30). Perhaps the most striking example in the whole Gospel of the symbolic value attached to an historical event, is the interpretation given to the utterance of Caiaphas in the Sanhedrin, as it is assembled with a view to determining the fate of Jesus (xi. 47ff.).[1]

This habit of assigning a double meaning to historical events is wrongly described as allegorizing. It is misleading to describe the Fourth Evangelist as an allegorist. Philo continually allegorizes the Old Testament scripture in order to extract a philosophical meaning, thus demonstrating that Greek thinkers are anticipated by the Old Testament. Philo believed in the verbal inspiration of the Old Testament, but he frequently allows himself to sacrifice the historical sense if its literal sense proves embarrassing or contradictory of the kind of thing he believes that God would do or say. He then takes refuge in the supposed hidden spiritual meaning, which is regarded as what God *intends* to say. He accepted only as much of the literal text as suited his preconceived ideas. Even Paul, though infrequently, does the same thing. His use of the story of Hagar (Gal. iv. 21-31) is allegorical. He also sacrifices history. Hagar never had any historical connexion with Judaism; 'in Isaac shall thy seed be called' (Gen. xxi. 12). In 1 Cor. ix. 9f. Paul allegorizes Deut. xxv. 4, on the ground that in the pages of the Divine Torah God would not concern Himself with oxen!

The allegorist fastens on details of the narrative, and

[1] A fuller treatment of all these instances and of others will be found in the Exposition.

twists them into all kinds of spiritual meanings. Philo deals in particulars, and allegorizes numbers or names as denoting particular qualities or characters.[1] The Fourth Evangelist does not deal much in particulars. His method is rather to make a narrative or a saying 'stand for something more general than itself'.[2] The Evangelist knows quite well what Caiaphas meant by his advice to the Sanhedrin, but in his utterance and in the fact that he was high priest *that year* (p. 244) there *was* actually another meaning which God put there. The actual events of history had that meaning. The facts are themselves the symbols, and John's method of writing history should be called *symbolism* rather than allegory. He does not torture details into allegorical meanings as Philo does. He is never fantastic. He thinks of these happenings in the life of Jesus in the flesh and His sayings *as actually significant in themselves.* They have really not two meanings, but just one in the intention and purpose of God. Philo allegorizes Gen. xvi. 7, and allows his mind to play around the word 'fountain'. 'A fountain is spoken of in many senses: in one sense our mind is meant by a fountain; in another the rational habit of instruction; in a third sense a bad disposition is indicated; in a fourth sense, a good disposition, the contrary of the preceding; in a fifth sense, the Creator and Father of the universe is himself thus spoken of in a figure.'[3] In the Fourth Gospel there is none of this fanciful intellectual meticulousness. Note the delicate interplay of meaning around the two words 'well' and 'spring' in iv. 5-15 (see R.V.m.). In practically every instance of symbolism in this Gospel, it is the eternal background, the upper world of 'Truth' that thrusts itself forward, makes itself visible and intelligible on 'this bank and shoal of time'. For the Evangelist 'history' means that the regulative and decisive moment in all history has come. The Logos was made flesh and dwelt among men, and they 'beheld His glory'. The Evangelist has a conception of the human

[1] e.g. 'Leah', 'Rachel' (Gen. xxix. 17). *De Congressu Eruditionis* 24-33, Loeb IV, pp. 471-5.

[2] J. M. Thompson, *Proceedings of Oxford Society of Historical Theology*, December 4, 1913, p. 25; quoted by Kennedy *PCR*, p. 48.

[3] *De Fuga.* 177, Loeb V, p. 107.

history of the incarnate Word all his own. Individual human actions and utterances, men's behaviour and response to the personality and appeal of the Logos Christ, their belief and unbelief, acceptance and rejection, all contribute in the providence of God towards the final revelation in human form of the ever-active Word. This is a symbolic view of history, not allegory. The actual history is conceived as a comprehensive sign of what is supra-historical—the eternal world of 'Truth' realizing itself in the world of men and things. The revelation is personal, for the bearer of the revelation is a Person, Jesus the Son of Man, on whom the angels of God ascend and descend. He 'has opened the Kingdom of heaven to all believers', even on earth.[1]

The portrait of Jesus in this Gospel is confessedly a theological interpretation of the personality of Jesus of Nazareth. If we begin by assuming that theological interpretations of Jesus always lie under the suspicion of forsaking the firm ground of factual history, it is useless to pursue the question further. 'Theology' is essentially 'thinking about God', and issues in a definite conclusion regarding His nature and purpose. Can the material for such thinking encounter our minds at all, unless God reveals Himself? No man can come to any conclusion at all about the character and purpose even of a fellow man, unless the latter chooses to unlock the doors of his heart either in word or deed, or in both. No assertion could be emptier than that made by the Johannine writer that 'God is love' (1 Ep. iv. 8), if 'love' is interpreted in terms of the private feeling of a God who remains inactive and invisible. Love must be interpreted in terms of will and purpose. 'If God exists as a good will, that will must do its work in the world of time and event as a will to power, not wholly unlike our own, and so coming to itself as we must, through the saving of others. Christianity is right in holding that such a God, if he exists, must somehow appear in the temporal order.'[2] We must assume a power of 'Divine

[1] For a comparison with the rabbinic method of *Haggadah*, whose object was illustration and edification, see Drummond *CAFG*, p. 31. But that method is chiefly allegorical, and does not emphasize that history itself and in itself, is symbolic, as the Fourth Evangelist does.

[2] W. E. Hocking, *Human Nature and its Re-making* (1929), p. 423.

aggression'. The story of the aggression of Divine Love in the world of men, the active presence of God in the person, work, and teaching of Jesus, is the theme of the Fourth Gospel (iii. 16).

This Evangelist speaks of a human personality, Jesus Christ. Like all the Evangelists, he also believes that Jesus is the Son of God, a Divine Being. He never speaks of Him as One whose person and mission must be interpreted in terms of a unique relationship to God, simply because the orthodox tradition demands it; not even solely because this tradition is verified in his own experience and in the consequences it has had for the world. This Evangelist never behaves as though he were *imposing* an interpretation on the facts of Jesus' life and teaching. He always speaks as though the facts themselves had a voice and a purpose in their own precise historical situation. Indeed the facts are not mere facts, but events, summed up in the great Divine Event, 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us'. The Evangelist's whole mind is directed towards the voice that he has heard, and the purpose he has discerned in that human life. The voice is God's own voice, and the purpose is God's final purpose for the salvation of men. His readers know many facts about Jesus, but not yet as he knows them (cf. xx. 30, 31). For this reason, he accustoms us to the omission of many details that are found in the other Gospels. His theological interpretation is more to him than even the mere facts and sayings by themselves; for it has been created by the facts themselves, not imposed upon them.[1] Sometimes, as in the Lazarus story, the facts are dissolved in interpretation, fused in the crucible of an inspired imagination. Yet, as thousands of disciples could testify,

> That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows,
> Or decomposes but to recompose,
> Become my universe that feels and knows![2]

[1] Cf. C. H. Dodd, *History and the Gospel*, Chapter III, to whom I am greatly indebted.

[2] Browning, Epilogue to *Dramatis Personae*.

CHAPTER IV

THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL

FORTUNATELY we have a statement of the purpose of the Gospel in xx. 30, 31. This passage, rightly understood, along with certain statements in the Prologue, is the key to the Evangelist's aim. Several things are stated in these verses.

(1) *That the author has a distinctly dogmatic purpose.* 'These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name.' The same is true, to a lesser extent, of the Synoptic Gospels, although the writers do not so clearly express it, nor allow it so extensively to dominate the form of their writing. The important thing to note is that John evidently means to afford evidence for a dogma of the Church of his day, that *Jesus* is the Christ, the Son of God, which is founded on and completed in an experience described as 'having life in His name'. He writes at a time belonging to the end of the first century A.D., or to the very beginning of the second, when it had become necessary to emphasize, as against the tendency to sublimate Christianity into a Gnostic philosophy, the doctrine that Jesus is an historical Person, in whom alone Christian faith must be grounded.[1] The doctrine has two aspects: (*a*) *that Jesus is the Messiah;* (*b*) *that Jesus is the Son of God.*

(*a*) It is important to note, in view of the fact that the Johannine thought has been regarded as prevailingly Hellenic, that the Messiahship of Jesus is prominent everywhere. The first disciples acknowledge Jesus as Messiah (i. 41, 45, 49; cf. vi. 69). So does Martha (xi. 27). As Messiah, Jesus enters Jerusalem (xii. 12-19). As such He is delivered up to Pilate (xviii. 33-35): is condemned (xix. 3, 12-15): is crucified (xix. 19-22). This Gospel alone preserves the title 'Messias'.

[1] See pp. 43f.

(*b*) 'Son of God' and 'Messiah' or Christ are not completely equivalent. The Son of God is more than the Jewish Messiah, and the fulfilment of merely Jewish hopes. Jesus is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. John speaks of men as 'children' of God. Jesus is *the* 'Son of God'.[1] The power to become 'children' is given to men through Jesus (i. 12). He has a unique relationship to God ('only-begotten'). 'Son of God' is not an alternative for 'Messiah'. Sonship is likeness to God. Jesus is a Divine Being. As such the term 'Son' is understood by the Jewish opponents (v. 18). To them it is a blasphemous claim (x. 36; xix. 7). Jesus is 'Son of God' from all eternity (xvii. 5, 24). One clear aim of the Evangelist is to prove that Jesus is no unlettered man from an obscure village (i. 46; vii. 15, 48), but actually the 'King of the Jews', in whose royal person all the hopes and promises given to the nation, for the sake of the whole world, are fulfilled. (See notes on xix. 19-22.)

(2) *It is, however, more than intellectual assent to a dogma that is required.* The Christian must have *life in His name.* 'Name' is here used in the Jewish sense. Our names have now no essential relation to ourselves. Originally they had. A man called 'Smith' was a smith; or 'Baker' was a baker. There is a close relation between the name and the personality in primitive thought. Among primitive peoples, to know a person's name is 'to have power over the bearer of the name; hence the reluctance to give a stranger one's name. It was but a modification of such belief that made the Hebrew frequently use "name" as almost an equivalent of the "personality" or "character" or nature of the person or thing named; and consequently, when a writer wishes to express forcibly the nature of a person or place, he says he will be called so-and-so, or his name will be so-and-so. . . . The meaning of Is. ix. 6 is that the child will actually be all that the name "wonderful", etc., implies. Cf. Prov. xxi. 24; Is. lxiii. 16.'[2] The 'name' of God is God Himself, revealed in events of history and human life (Is. liv. 5, lxiv. 2).

To 'believe in the name' of Jesus is to believe in, and to

[1] See p. 61.
[2] Hastings *DB* III, p. 478b.

accept His claims, as substantiated in the story of His life on earth, and in the experience of the Church and of individuals. To have 'life in His name' is to come into a real and living relationship with Him, to 'abide in Him', as is the more frequent phrase in the Johannine writings. The aim of the Evangelist is to bring his readers into the same fellowship with God that he himself enjoys. To 'trust' in or to 'believe in' Jesus or in the name of Jesus as the incarnation of the Divine Love, is not mere intellectual assent. What chiefly characterizes the use by the Jew of the 'name' of God, and by the Christian of the 'name' of Jesus is that the name is not *given* by men, but is a name or personal character made known by God Himself. God does so in a personal way, in the words and works of Jesus (xiv. 10). The 'name' is revealed in the person Jesus Christ. The response asked for must also be personal, which is *faith*. 'Believing' and 'knowing' Christ are in this Gospel practically synonymous with our personal response (xvii. 23). The name of God is love (1 Ep. iv. 8), revealed in the Evangelist's story of Jesus' life. 'The only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made God plain' (John i. 18). This trust in Jesus has supreme results in conduct, which is the side of the fellowship chiefly emphasized in the First Epistle. 'Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?' (1 John v. 5). For the Evangelist, love to God and love to man are twin streams from the one source—Life Eternal (xvii. 3; 1 John iv. 7-21). This personal faith in Jesus is equivalent to the possession of eternal life by the believer who exercises it. Jesus came in order that men might have life and might have it 'to the full' (x. 10). Unbelief is a state of death, even in life (v. 24). Unbelief is not the rejection of certain doctrinal propositions about God or Christ, but rejection of an actual historical and personal approach made by God in sending Jesus Christ out of love, to the world of men (iii. 16). This is the theme of the whole Gospel.

(3) The Evangelist also tells us in xx. 30, *that a selection of signs has been made out of many that were available*. The selection has been made out of sources available to him. The

writer's language does not suggest the use of established Gospels like Mark and Luke, which he is not likely to have made a mere quarry for his material. The sayings and doings of Jesus and the events of His life are regarded as transparencies through which was manifested the glory or divine nature of Jesus. The Evangelist has therefore been guided in his selection of signs by the desire to take just those that are most suitable for his purpose. The whole ministry of Jesus is a 'sign' of the presence of God on earth. God 'witnesses' through the words and works of Jesus (v. 36, 37).

(4) *For what body of readers is the Gospel intended?* Who are the 'ye' addressed in xx. 31? Tradition is unanimous in maintaining that the Gospel was intended for readers in Asia Minor, and that the seat of its origin is Ephesus. The readers are already Christians, whom the Evangelist knows, and who know him. The Gospel presupposes a certain knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus, and is meant to deepen and strengthen an already existing faith.

These readers required, above all, the means of establishing their faith on a sound basis of history. They had neither seen nor known Jesus of Nazareth in the flesh. There was a danger lest Christianity be sublimated into a philosophy: become, as it threatened to do later, a 'gnosticism'; i.e. a mystical spiritual perception of an unseen Lord, whose actual person and teaching were coming to be interpreted solely in terms of contemporary thinking, always a danger present to the Christian Church. There was the need for a reinterpretation of the story of the life, death and teaching of Jesus, so that, as in the earliest Christian preaching, the recital of that story might always have a place in the preaching of the Christian Gospel, and the hearers might realize that this gospel is not a human conviction or interpretation of a Figure of the past, but a proclamation of what God actually did at a certain moment of time in history, in the person of Jesus Christ.

We have already seen that even in Mark's Gospel there is a theological reinterpretation of the events of Jesus' life on earth (p. 3). What is the motive? The revaluation proves that even as early as the date of Mark's Gospel (*c.* A.D. 70) it had been necessary to reinstate and reinterpret the historical

facts of the Life on earth, in the interest of the Church's faith. The reinterpretation was made in Mark by the use of popular traditions whereby it was demonstrated that the Christ of the Church's faith once really lived and taught and died on the Cross.[1] In the earliest preaching the human story was an essential part of the Christian Gospel (Acts x. 37ff.).

Why does the author of *Hebrews* lay such stress on the actual sufferings and temptations of Jesus in the flesh? He is much more realistic in this respect than even the Evangelists. 'Tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin' (iv. 15); 'strong crying and tears' (v. 7); 'learned obedience by the things that he suffered' (v. 8). The author revalues these human experiences as the divinely appointed preparation for Christ's office as Heavenly High Priest (iv. 14–v. 10). That Jesus actually passed through these experiences and had a human consciousness of them, is an essential element in the Christian faith.

In the Johannine portrait of Jesus, we have the climax of this movement in the New Testament, to reintegrate the fact of the human personality of Jesus in the Church's message and creed. Here the movement appears as much more conscious and deliberate; so much so that, at certain points, Jesus seems to lose just those human traits and weaknesses which make Him real to us (e.g. vi. 5, 6; xi. 6, 33, 35-37, 41, 42).[2]

Before any of the Gospels were written, Paul had impressed the stamp of his preaching and thinking on the Churches of Asia Minor. Was the danger of obscuring the true humanity of Jesus in any way due to a misuse and distortion of Paul's teaching? There can be no doubt that for Paul the story of the human life of Jesus and His teaching were central in his message. Yet he does say once, 'Even though I have known Christ after the flesh, yet now I know him so no more' (2 Cor. v. 16). Paul so speaks in answer to his Jewish opponents who complained that his attitude towards the Jewish law was inconsistent with the example of Jesus. The burden of Paul's

[1] Mark's purpose is theological, not biographical. See A. E. J. Rawlinson, *Gospel of Mark*, p. 1.

[2] In my book *The Historic Jesus in the New Testament*, Chapter I, I have developed this theme more fully.

message was the Cross and Resurrection, and the 'Son of God in power' (Rom. i. 4). The incarnate life is a moving episode of voluntary humiliation on the part of a Divine pre-existent Being. In other hands than Paul's, his doctrine might be distorted so as to ignore the real historical basis of Christianity.

Moreover, in the Hellenistic world, Greek Christians and also Jewish Christians, imbued with the Greek spirit, would have difficulty in bringing together the historic personality of Jesus and the exalted Christ of the Christian message. Their particular difficulty was just the reverse of the modern antithesis, Jesus or the risen Christ. The liberal conception of Jesus, with its insistence on His human consciousness and sympathies, tends to see in the exalted Christ a theological interpretation of a much simpler story. On the other hand, in the first century, some Christians would have difficulty in believing that a Jesus who suffered shame and pain, and was put to death as a criminal, was betrayed by one disciple and denied by another, could ever have been a Divine Being.[1] The difficulty was caused chiefly by a Greek fashion of thought, which separated matter and spirit. The body is the 'tomb of the soul'. At death, the spirit leaves the body, and 'salvation' consists in freedom from the grosser matter of the body. When the body is discarded, the soul mounts up to its true home, and again reaches its natural affinity with the divine and indestructible.

As a result of this 'dualistic' type of thinking, it was natural that men should refuse to believe that the Divine Being Jesus, whom Christians now worshipped, could ever have been imprisoned in a mortal body. Hence arose what are called *Docetic* ideas of His person. The general teaching was that of a 'phantom' Jesus. To the Greek the Cross was 'foolishness', a thing to be brushed aside as impossible and incredible in the case of a divine being. Docetism cannot properly be regarded as a sect, or identified exclusively with any particular name like Cerinthus. It rather represented a tendency of thought which appears and reappears in the theology of many different schools. The essential thing is

[1] Cf. pp. 58f.

that Jesus Christ was man only in appearance. Some, like the writer of *The Acts of John*,[1] denied that Jesus had any material existence; He could be seen and heard, but the form and the voice differed on different occasions. Others were content to deny that He felt the pains of crucifixion; others, like Marcion, denied His birth. But all were alike in this, that they regarded Jesus as having been in no sense a real human being.[2]

The emphasis both in the Fourth Gospel, and especially in the Johannine Epistles, on the reality of our Lord's humanity, is undoubtedly intended to meet Docetic theories of His person. In the Gospel we are told that Jesus was *wearied* and *thirsty* (iv. 6, 7). He *wept* at the death of a friend (xi. 35). His suffering on the Cross was real; John alone records the utterance, 'I thirst' (xix. 28). His dead body on the Cross was that of a human being (xix. 34). In the Epistles we have such passages as 1 John i. 1-3; ii. 22; iv. 2ff.; 2 John 7. The theory is generally antagonized in the statement 'the Word became flesh'.[3] The Fourth Evangelist saw clearly that, unless historical reality was to be surrendered to religious speculation, the perplexities apparent in the minds of his hearers must be met, as to the relationship between the historic Jesus and the risen Christ. Disastrous compromise with the thought of the time must not take place. The only hope for the Christian faith was to restore to it the assurance of the abiding significance of the earthly life of Jesus.[4] Docetism represents one of the earliest attempts to interpret Christianity in terms of contemporary thought. If it had succeeded it would have acted as disastrously against the Christian faith as once the scientific axiom of the uniformity of nature, meekly accepted, threatened to do.

The polemic against Docetism is one of the main purposes

[1] In *The Acts of John* (97) it is stated that the real Christ appears to John on the Mount of Olives, and speaks thus: 'John! Unto the multitude down below in Jerusalem I am being crucified and pierced with lances and reeds, and gall and vinegar are given Me to drink; but I put it into thine heart to come up unto this mountain, that thou mightest hear matters needful for a disciple to learn from his Master and for a man to learn from his God.' Cf. *ib.* 93. (E.Tr. M. R. James, *Apocryphal New Testament.*)

[2] Burkitt *GHT*, p. 274.

[3] But see p. 238.

[4] Scott *FG*, p. 372.

of the Gospel. John, like all the Evangelists, is writing from the standpoint of Christians, to whom the experience of communion with the exalted Christ, through the Spirit, is most real. He, more completely than the other three, interprets the life of Jesus of Nazareth in terms of this experience. The exalted Christ is also the historic Jesus. What God accomplished on earth, in actual history, is sufficient to account for the Church's faith and message. This Gospel is a supreme attempt to integrate the historic person and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth in the faith of the Church.[1]

(5) Other subordinate polemical aims in the Gospel will be indicated in the course of the exposition.[2] One principal aim, however, that should be mentioned is the desire to establish the idea of the Church as the guardian of the faith.[3] The Evangelist writes to the Church, and speaks in a representative fashion. Note the 'we' of i. 14, which appears even on the lips of Jesus (iv. 22), and the opening verses of the First Epistle. Very often the singular passes into the plural form in respect of those who are addressed (i. 51). In the exposition of i. 19–iv. 54 I have tried to bring out the underlying idea of the origins of the Christian Church. Chapter xvii is the 'consecration' of the Church already existing in nucleus in the group of disciples. The Church as the 'body' of Christ is indicated in ii. 21. The Church is both universal (x. 16; xii. 32), and already a community separate from the world (xvii. 6, 9). The doctrine of the Church is not dogmatically conceived, as a body of beliefs to be accepted on outward authority. What the Church teaches has actually taken place on earth. All the elements of the earliest Christian 'gospel' as it appears in the sermons in the earlier chapters in Acts, are present.[4] (*a*) The 'coming' or 'sending' of Jesus is the final fulfilment of God's eternal purpose. (*b*) The whole ministry is the 'revelation' of God's 'glory'. (*c*) The exaltation of Jesus by way of the Cross is stressed continually.

[1] Compare what is said on the significance of the 'flesh' and 'blood' of Jesus in vi. 52-59. (See Exposition.)

[2] e.g. the polemic against a Baptist sect, pp. 109f.

[3] On the subject of the Church, see Scott *FG*, Chapter IV.

[4] See the outline of the earliest Christian preaching in *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, by C. H. Dodd, pp. 38ff.

(*d*) The Holy Spirit. (*e*) The appeal for repentance appears as the demand for faith in the person of Jesus. Unbelief is darkness and death. There is also an implied polemic against the growth of 'officialism' in the Church. (See notes on x. 1-13 and cf. 2 Ep. 9; 3 Ep. 9, 10.) The Church is a brotherhood of love, witnessing to the world (xvii. 18-23).

CHAPTER V

THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE GOSPEL

An attempt will be made in this chapter to analyse the atmosphere of religious thought that prevailed in the Graeco-Roman world, particularly in Asia Minor, about the time when the Fourth Gospel was published.

Within the Roman Empire there existed a bewildering variety of religions and religious experience. The conquests of Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.) had brought in their train an influx of religious ideas from all over the known world. India, Persia, Babylonia, Egypt, and Syria all sent their contributions. The various religious types never actually coalesced into one inclusive religious movement during the succeeding centuries. They were too individualistic in their appeal for that to happen. There was little in their doctrinal position which could afford common ground with the Christian faith. Vague and indefinable as these religious movements of Asiatic-Greek thought were, we may describe them by a common name—Hellenistic. Judaism, even long before A.D. 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed, had spread over the known world. This 'Diaspora' Judaism both strongly affected and was to some extent affected by Hellenism, as Philo's writings show. The Jesus of the Fourth Gospel is presented as drawing to Himself all the best thought in the contemporary world, and also as largely antagonistic to it. Yet our study will show how essentially Jewish is the basis of all the Evangelist's interpretation of the Christian faith.

In the history of Greek religion the period which stretches from Plato to the time of the earlier Gnostics is usually called the Hellenistic period. Alexander and his successors, the Diadochi, proceeded deliberately to impose a system of Greek thought and life on the vanquished peoples. The attempt,

however, only ended in failure, and the portion of the Hellenistic period which synchronizes with the beginnings of the Christian era is, in this connexion, specially significant. By the time of Plato, the traditional beliefs in the ancient Olympian gods had already crumbled away under the attacks of philosophers. These attacks were conducted on grounds of morality. The stories of these ancient gods no longer satisfied, and often shocked the moral sense. The business of philosophy was to rid religion of superstitions. This also, like all purely rationalistic movements, was doomed to fail. Moreover, great social changes were taking place. The old free city-state (*polis*) of the Greeks had disintegrated under the pressure of a military monarchy, and not even the more tolerant rule of the Romans could preserve the rights and ideals of life for which the ancient *polis* stood.[1] The common religion that centred around the Greek city life also fell to pieces. Once in Greece the city was the state, and each city had its own patron deity. With the disintegration of the *polis*, the old form of Greek social life passed away, and the boundaries of nationality were broken down. The spirit of society became cosmopolitan, as in like manner religion became what is called 'syncretistic', a term used to denote the spirit of compromise which minimizes theological differences.

We must, therefore, be prepared to find that the type of non-Christian and anti-Christian thought that is reflected in the pages of the Fourth Gospel—written as it was for Christians of Asia Minor—is somewhat different from the ceremonial Judaism of the Synoptic Gospels. It is this later Hellenism that forms the environment of the Gospel. Our direct knowledge of this period is unfortunately very small. It has to be gathered widely from quotations preserved in later writers. There is no philosopher of the period whose works are extant, save Philo. Philo was an Alexandrian Jewish philosopher, almost contemporary with Jesus, who made it his aim to demonstrate that all that was best in Greek philosophy had been anticipated in the Old Testament.[2] It is well to re-

[1] Gilbert Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, pp. 105ff.

[2] For an account of Philo, the reader is referred to *Philo's Contribution to Religion* by H. A. A. Kennedy.

member that Philo was one among many such writers, in view of the somewhat exaggerated position that is usually accorded to him in connexion with the Fourth Gospel. Philo has no monopoly of the Logos conception. It belonged to the whole environment of the time. It would be rash to conclude that every writer who nowadays employs the term ' evolution ' has read the works of Darwin. And the fact that John speaks of the *Logos* is no proof that he has read Philo.

We may now make an attempt to isolate one or two of the principal currents of religious thought that are apparent in this ' Hellenism ', of which we shall presently hear so much in connexion with our study of the Gospel.

I. Judaism

In the midst of this welter of religious thought Judaism was, by its inherent nature and in accord with its past history, the most successful in preserving its identity. By the end of the first century A.D., the Jewish religion, for various reasons, was widespread throughout the Roman world.

Under Augustus the Jews formed seven *per cent* of the population of the Empire. It is unnecessary to enter fully into all the causes that led to the Diaspora, as this scattering of the Jewish nation is called. Both by force, and by the compulsion of trade interests, more particularly after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the Jewish nation and the Jewish religion were dispersed over the known world. Judaism had also become a missionary religion. Perhaps *proselytizing* is a more appropriate term than missionary. Detached from the Temple worship at Jerusalem, the Jews had synagogues everywhere, which were centres of Jewish influence and thought, and of proselytizing zeal. Vast numbers, mostly Asiatic Greeks, must have adopted the Jewish faith, whilst retaining their Greek forms of thought. The earliest preachers of the Christian Gospel found in these synagogue communities, as Paul did, a starting-point for their message. In this situation, and not only in the more restricted area of controversy depicted in the Synoptic Gospels, is to be found

the key to the strongly-marked Jewish controversial element in the Fourth Gospel. In this Gospel the Judaism portrayed, on the basis of recorded controversies of Jesus with Jewish opponents (see p. 23), reflects the polemic of the Christian mission against Diaspora Judaism.

Side by side, however, with this polemical strain, there appears a strong sense that Judaism and Christianity are closely related. The writer is clearly a Jew of Palestine, and both his language and his thought are cast in a Jewish mould. He built upon the position established by Paul, that all that was valuable and permanent in Judaism had passed over into Christianity. He distinguishes the 'Israelite indeed' from those who reject the claims of Jesus, and whose defection he attributes to 'guile' (i. 47). Nathanael is the type of those who find in Jesus the fulfilment of all their hopes. The Evangelist's controversy is with the Jew who clung tenaciously to the fact of his historical descent from Abraham, and had missed the meaning of the past history of the nation (viii. 39ff.). 'Before Abraham was, I am' (viii. 58).

The echoes of conflict with the Jews are heard everywhere in the Fourth Gospel. We feel instinctively that "the Jews', so frequently spoken of, mean for the Evangelist not merely Jews of Palestine, but stand for that great body of organized opposition to the claims of Christ, which was represented in the Hellenistic Judaism of the Dispersion, when it came in contact with the Christian preaching. He is never so true to his method of writing as in the accounts he gives of these Jewish controversies. He takes actual points, such as the Sabbath, or the question of descent from Abraham, that must have emerged in the actual ministry of Jesus, and so treats them as to make the issue intelligible to his readers. The points discussed, however, in these controversies often pass over into such questions as the equality of Jesus with God (v. 18ff.). Such questions could only arise at a later stage of Christian thought, when it had become more reflective and dogmatic, and especially when it came into violent contact with Jewish monotheism.

It must not, however, be forgotten that at every passover thousands of Greek-speaking Jews would make their appear-

ance in Jerusalem, and that many of them were domiciled there, as the presence of their synagogues shows (Acts vi. 9). The fact, therefore, that Jesus is represented as engaged in controversy with Hellenist Jews in Jerusalem cannot be regarded as, in itself, a breach of historical probability. A letter of Herod Agrippa to Caligula is preserved by Philo, as saying that 'Jerusalem is the capital not of a single country, but of most, because of its colonies in Egypt, Phoenicia, Syria in general, and Hollow Syria, as also in Pamphylia, Cilicia, most districts of Asia, as far as Bithynia, and the outlying parts of Pontus.'

Justin Martyr's writings prove that in the Christian controversy with Hellenistic Judaism, the subjects debated in the Fourth Gospel would be likely to arise. His *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* (A.D. 150-160)—a defence of Christianity against Judaism, purporting to be the result of a two days' discussion—deals with such subjects as: the obscure origin of Jesus (viii; cf. John vii. 27); His birthplace (cviii; cf. John vii. 41f.); Sabbath observance (xxiii, xxvi.f., xlvii, etc.; cf. John ix. 14f.; vii. 19f.); the coming of Elijah (xlix.f.; cf. John i. 21); Jews and Samaritans (lxxviii; cf. John iv. 1ff.; viii. 48). At the same time, it is certain that the Judaism of the Dispersion, with all its strong affinities with Palestinian Judaism, and its rigid monotheism had both made its influence felt in Hellenistic religious speculation (p. 77), and as the writings of Philo show, borrowed the methods of Greek speculation. ' Salvation ' in the cults and philosophies of the Gentile world meant ' knowledge ' of the truths relating to the origin of the world, and its nature. The Jewish Torah was regarded as containing the true and inspired account of creation, of the nature of man, and of what God demanded of him. The fanatical spirit that animated the revolt in Judea in A.D. 66, with its apocalyptic outlook, did not affect Diaspora Judaism. These Diaspora Jews were secure in their rights of worship, as guaranteed by the imperial power, and were much more concerned to see in the divinely given Torah, the universal religion where the guesses at God of the heathen cults were answered and anticipated. Even the Logos conception of the Stoic was regarded as a foreshadowing of the Divine Word

or Wisdom, and appeared in the synagogue teaching.[1] There was already in existence a Jewish 'Gnosticism' or type of religion founded on 'knowledge', i.e. a mystic perception of the spiritual meaning latent within the sacred Scriptures. This type of Diaspora religion appears in a collection of hymns discovered in 1909 by Dr. Rendel Harris, entitled *The Odes of Solomon*. Some are clearly Jewish, and a few have evidently been affected by Christian ideas. The date given to this hymn-book of some obscure community varies from A.D. 73 to early in the second century. These odes contain some remarkable parallels with Johannine forms of expression.[2]

II. Stoicism

As a philosophical system, Stoicism recognized as its founder Zeno (342-270 B.C.), a native of Crete. It passed through several clearly marked stages, but for our purpose we need only deal with it as it emerged in the Roman period, when the system had gained a firm hold on cultured Roman thought. For our knowledge of the Stoic thought of this period we are chiefly indebted to the writings of Epictetus, Seneca, and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. This period covers a time, roughly speaking, from the birth of Christ to the death of Aurelius in A.D. 180.

It is well known that Paul shows a certain familiarity with the Stoic thought of this period. His fundamental conceptions, however, are different, and it is easy to be misled by parallelisms which, when examined in their contexts, either disappear altogether, or resolve themselves into examples of the way in which Stoic expressions had taken root in the popular mind.[3] It is from the Stoic poet Aratus that Paul

[1] W. L. Knox, *St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles*, Chapter II; J. E. Carpenter, *The Johannine Writings*, pp. 270-77; Scott *FG*, p. 72.

[2] See the editions by J. Rendel Harris, and by J. H. Bernard. Cf. J. E. Carpenter, *The Johannine Writings*, pp. 275ff. Also *Expository Times*, October 1910.

[3] See Lightfoot, *Philippians*, essay on *S. Paul and Seneca*, pp. 270ff.

quotes the words, 'We also are his offspring' (Acts xvii. 28), and probably also the preceding words, 'In him we live and move, and have our being'. Tarsus itself was a centre of Stoic teaching from about 200 B.C. By this time Stoicism had become eclectic, and had incorporated ideas derived from Epicurus, the Pythagoreans, and certain Eastern philosophies. In other words, it was mingling with the great Hellenistic stream, but its main conceptions of God and man dominated the general thought of the time.

It ought to be distinctly understood at the outset, that when we speak of Stoicism as a part of the environment of the Fourth Gospel, we are not speaking of a merely academic system. Academic systems of thought, at least those that are as tenacious of life as Stoicism, gradually permeate into the regions of popular thought, and ordinary men begin to talk and think more or less unconsciously in terms of them. It is in this sense that the Gospel may be said to have any relation to Stoic thought. Stoicism had long passed out of the hands of the academic philosopher. The Stoics had come to be known as missionary preachers of morality. They developed an order of wandering preachers, of whom mention has already been made (p. 24). The tone of the Stoic teaching is markedly didactic and hortatory. Moral earnestness characterized the teaching from the first, being, as it was and continued to be, a deep and sincere reaction against the degeneracy of the times.

We have space only to direct the attention to one or two of the main points in the Stoic system.

1. THE DOCTRINE OF THE IDEAL 'WISE MAN'

Stoicism is really the offspring of despair. Faced with the great facts of moral evil, pain and death, denizens of a world where blind destiny seemed to rule and human freedom was checked and frustrated at every point, men had come to believe that Fate or Fortune alone held sway. The causes were partly political and partly physical. Earthquake and pestilence, the constant arbitrament of arms, despotic rule,

brought great insecurity and disquiet to the individual life.[1] The Greek was confronted with the same problem as the Hebrew in his days of misfortune and exile. The wicked prosper and the good are oppressed. The resultant mood of pessimism is ultimately common to them both. 'The wise man's eyes are in his head, and the fool walketh in darkness: and yet I perceived that one event happeneth to them all' (Eccles. ii. 14).[2] It was the business of the Stoic to discover and to reduce to rule, some mode of living and attitude of mind that would make life not only bearable, but efficient under such conditions. He gradually evolved his doctrine of the ideal 'wise man', the perfect human character.

The parallel between the Stoic and the Hebrew in his reaction to the problem of pain and evil, is closer than at first sight appears. The answer they both give is an answer of faith. In a sense, both are great believers. Both have faith in the divine government. The Hebrew 'wise man' achieved his purpose of steadfastness in the midst of all the uncertainties of life by a passionate belief in the 'judgment' or 'righteousness' of Jehovah, by a sense of personal security in the hand of God, and by a fervent hope in the restoration and readjustment of all things in the Messianic age. 'Fear God, and keep His commandments'; 'I know that my Redeemer liveth'. The Stoic, on the other hand, found rest in the conception that God and Nature are one. A unity of purpose runs through the whole of nature, a world-soul, the Logos. The Universe, taken in its entirety, is perfect, and there is really no such thing as evil in it. Reason in man is akin to reason (*logos*) in the universe; indeed is one substance with it. This 'reason' is also purpose, and the purpose is believed to be good. But the Stoic nowhere defines what good is. He does not know and cannot know, because he does not know the whole. The Johannine writer does because he knows Jesus,

[1] Cf. E. Bevan, *Stoics and Sceptics*, pp. 25f.

[2] On the question whether Ecclesiastes shows traces of Greek philosophy, see Plumptre's edition (*Camb. Bible*), pp. 30ff.; Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, pp. 260ff. But the scepticism of Ecclesiastes is ethical rather than religious. God may be far away, and occupy a moral neutrality; but He exists and is powerful. The idea that 'God is in heaven and thou upon earth' is not Hellenic.

and Jesus is the Logos, in the sense that He is the revealed 'Word' of God. The Stoic is sure only that the world-course does not proceed at random, but is like the uncoiling of a rope, no fortuitous concourse of atoms as the Epicurean held.[1]

The Stoic has another name for this uniformity of nature. He calls it *pronoia* or 'providence'. It is quite clear that, logically, the position is inconsistent. This the Stoic practically admits when he allows that God Himself is under the sway of fate or destiny.[2] The inconsistency, however, is really due to a lack of interest in philosophical speculation for its own sake, a lack which the Stoic shared with the Hebrew. It was due, on the one hand, to the ultimately prophetic and dogmatic character of the Stoic thought, and to a practical desire to rescue the idea of the uniformity of nature from becoming identified with blind physical causation; on the other hand, to a repugnance 'to dissolve God into an abstract idea. It was the crude expression of an intense conviction that God is real.'[3] Yet the fact remains that behind the throne of Zeus stands Fate. In Hebrew thought, God's will is sovereign, and ultimately what happens in the world or in human experience is foreseen by Him. Things happen as they must; but the 'must' is not a blind but a 'seeing' necessity. The 'must' in Stoicism is like the fact that the acorn must turn into an oak, not a blade of corn; the puppy into a dog, not an ox. The Hebrew knows nothing of natural law in our sense. All that happens is the result of either a direct act or an arrangement of God. Submission to the will of God is acceptance of the will of a God whom he knows and can trust.

We are, however, concerned here only with the Stoic endeavour to make life not merely bearable but efficient under such conditions. The remedy is *apathy*. Our word 'apathy'

[1] For the Stoic 'Nature' we might substitute what we call 'civilization', meaning a scheme of things where men as individuals are subordinate. 'Nature at its roughest and crudest is a man-trap, but nature refined and robbed of grossness is hardly less so.' H. R. Mackintosh, *The Divine Initiative*, p. 18.

[2] '*Irrevocabilis humana pariter ac divina cursus vehit*' (Seneca, *de Providentia* v. 6).

[3] Bevan, *op. cit.*, p. 41; cf. G. Murray, *Five Stages*, pp. 178f.

fails to preserve the nobility of the Greek equivalent. The conception reaches a certain cold grandeur, without completely degenerating into a selfish aloofness. The ideal man must learn to cultivate *inwardly* complete and lofty detachment from the world's unrest and suffering, and even from the disturbing tyranny of human affection. Pain and evil are unrealities. It follows that it is not these, but our notion (*dogma*) of them that has any reality. We may illustrate by two well-known passages from Epictetus:

'If you love an earthen jar, say, it is an earthen jar that I love; for, when it is broken, you will not be disturbed: if you kiss your little child or your wife, say that it is a human being whom you are kissing, for, when either of them dies, you will not be disturbed.' (*Manual* 3.)

'When you see anyone weeping, in sorrow because his child is away from home, or has died, or because he has lost his possessions, take care that the impression of what you see does not carry you away, as though the man himself were involved in evils that come from without. Rather at once draw a distinction in your own mind and let it be natural to you to say, "It is not what has happened that distresses this man (for it does not distress another), but his notion of what has happened." At the same time, so far as speaking is concerned, do not hesitate to go along with him, and even if it so happen, to groan with him. Take care, however, that the groan does not come from within.'[1]

The Stoic held that this *apathy* is 'in our power', and is the primary secret of ideal human existence. 'Things themselves have no natural power to form our judgments.'[2] On what, then, is this judgment of things based? It is based on Reason (*logos*), but not in the sense of a logical deduction from premises, or induction from particular facts. Reason is the Logos. Each human soul is essentially a part of the world-soul, and life according to the great all-embracing purpose in the world-soul, i.e. according to nature, means the power to distinguish those things that are in our power from

[1] Or 'do not groan in the centre of your being'. *Manual* 16; cf. *Dissertations* i. 18.

[2] M. Aurelius, *Meditations* vi. 52.

those that are not. Epictetus would have said that the life of wife or child, or the coming of death or misfortune, or loss of property are ' not in our power ', and therefore ought to be as things ' indifferent '. An attitude of inward detachment towards these is therefore necessary. The things in our power are our own wills, and the formation of judgments and opinions. All else is to be surrendered to God.[1]

It must not be supposed, however, that the Stoic apathy meant complete selfishness, as the second quotation from Epictetus shows.[2] No system of ancient thought did more to promote the brotherhood of man. They held that the individual life is not meant to be an isolated unit, but the life of a citizen of the great city, which is the whole world. We are to do everything possible for the good of our fellows. We are to practise philanthropy, even to the point of incurring physical pain, or death itself for our brethren. Yet we ought to preserve a complete indifference as to whether we succeed or fail. A man must not ' concern ' himself with his fellows, in the sense that he allows their suffering to disturb his equanimity. Pity to the Stoic is actually a vice. The ideal sage must practise ' independence ', and should be master of his own fate.[3]

The Stoic teaching always made its final appeal to the ideal human character as exemplified in the lives of notable men like Socrates and Alexander. Of course it had to idealize them for its purpose. The catholicity of Epictetus is remarkable when he idealizes Diogenes the Cynic, and holds him up as an example of virtue to be imitated.[4] The Stoic also demanded a very strict consistency of creed and practice in his teachers. It is, therefore, to be expected that, to minds held by such an ideal, the religion of Christ, whose central figure

[1] Epictetus, *Dissertations* iv. 4.

[2] A man fulfils his function of being good by sympathizing. There is no problem of pain for the Stoic.

[3] e.g. pity is classed with envy in Epictetus, *Dissertations* iv. 1, as a moral defect. Cf. Bevan, *Stoics and Sceptics*, pp. 65-6; Davidson, *The Stoic Creed*, pp. 188ff. The Stoic scheme of thought cannot ultimately be acquitted of a selfish and impersonal aloofness. The Stoic taught by means of examples, and his models are great ones of the earth, like Hercules and Alexander and the Emperors. His philanthropy required a sense of power underlying it, and is the direct opposite of Luke xxii. 25f.

[4] *Dissertations* III. xxii. 6; xxix. 4.

was 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief', who 'carried men's sicknesses, and bare their infirmities', would fail to appeal. Stoicism and Christianity would join issue, not so much as rival systems of philosophic thought, but as holding contradictory ideals of what a perfect human character ought to be.

In this connexion certain touches in the portrait of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel are significant. Gethsemane, to the Stoic, would represent a moral breakdown. John omits the scene altogether, preserving, however, the words that were uttered (xii. 27). The sense of frustration and disappointment that appears in the consciousness of Jesus in the Synoptics is strangely absent in this Gospel. To the Stoic it would be an insuperable barrier to belief in Jesus, indicating a fatal lack of 'self-sufficiency'. It is noticeable that what has been called the 'self-possession' of Jesus in this Gospel appears side by side with a complete subordination of His own will to the will of God (x. 18). Note the magnificent picture of the 'self-sufficiency' of Jesus in John xiii. 1-3 which is yet subordinated to God's will, and the act of lowly service which becomes its expression (*vv.* 4ff.) It is extremely probable that these touches are intended to provide, in the true spirit of the missionary preacher, a real point of contact with contemporary ideals of life. 'Who is this Jesus of yours,' the stoically-minded controversialist might say, 'who claims to be the perfect revelation of God, and the highest ideal of human character? Was He not disturbed and disquieted by real moral temptation? Was He not moved with compassion and pity when He saw the multitude, or looked on a leper? Was not His soul troubled in Gethsemane, and His sweat as it were great drops of blood? What do you mean by making the very centre of your religion a man on a cross, the emblem of a shameful end, who suffered thereon agonies of mind and body?' To the Greek in general, the notion that a divine being could feel pain was incredible. We may recall the comic scene in the under-world from Aristophanes, where there is a dispute as to which of the two travellers is the god, and which his servant. It is proposed to settle the matter by finding out which of them can feel bodily pain:

You should flog him well,
For if he is a god he won't perceive it.
. . . . . .
Whichever of us two you first behold
Flinching or crying out—he's not the god.[1]

Paul spoke aptly when he said that the Cross was to the Greek 'foolishness', in other words, 'a matter of ridicule'. The 'foolish' man, as distinct from the 'wise' man, was he who allowed himself to be inwardly disturbed by evil, pain, or death. The wise man should not dread death. He may, indeed, take his own life, for the sake of friends or fatherland, or if he is suffering from an incurable disease. God sometimes gives men the signal for retreat, and 'opens the door, and says to you, Go'. Suicide, 'the way out', must not, however, be practised thoughtlessly, or in an aggrieved or cowardly mood. 'The cabin smokes—so I take leave of it. Why make ado?'[2] The Stoic believed in dying for men on occasion, or putting an end to his own life, but it must be done calmly and majestically.[3] When a man suffers sickness or death he must sicken and die 'as becomes a god'.

If we realize that it was in some such atmosphere as this that the Fourth Gospel was written, a flood of light is thrown on many of its scenes and utterances. Certain traits in the character of Jesus selected for emphasis are significant. He is so far impervious to the authority and influence of human affection that He refuses to allow it to determine or to deflect Him from His course (ii. 4; vii. 3ff.; xi. 3-7; cf. pp. 231ff.). He is obedient in all things to the will of God, and on occasion even the pressing claims of natural hunger are suppressed (iv. 31-34). Jesus, moved as He is by the treachery of Judas, yet shows His control of Himself and the situation by actually permitting the traitor to do the deed (xiii. 27). On the other hand, Jesus was 'troubled in spirit' (xii. 27; xiii. 21) at the imminence of the Cross. At the grave of Lazarus, Jesus is said to be moved 'in His spirit', and once, by a curious turn of phrase, is said to 'trouble Himself' (xi. 33). The phrase may be a somewhat clumsy attempt to combine the ideas of

[1] *Frogs*, 632ff. (Rogers).
[2] M. Aurelius, *Meditations* v. 29.
[3] M. Aurelius, *Meditations* viii. 47; cf. Bevan, *Stoics and Sceptics*, p. 70.

stoical ' self-possession ' and sensitiveness to human unbelief. Jesus is also said to ' weep ' (xi. 33f.), but the tears are not due to sorrow. They are shed at the unbelief of the mourners (see expository notes). The cure for human disturbance and fear in the presence of death is faith in God and in Jesus (xiv. 1, 27). A moving tenderness and pity breathes all through the closing discourses in chapters xiv-xvi, where Jesus speaks with a lofty divine calm as He takes farewell of His sorrowing disciples.

The purpose is evidently to commend the portrait of Jesus, not only to those who were influenced by Stoic forms of thought, but also to those who found it vain to suppress the spontaneous outburst of human emotion. The cultured Stoic subdued these fountains of inward disturbance by walling them over. The ordinary man found them welling up in his heart, and having drunk of them, he thirsted still. Jesus is represented as having emotions, which, however, do not disturb His divine self-control. On xi. 33 Abbott says, ' To me the Author of the Fourth Gospel seems here to be attempting the impossible. In describing Christ as " troubling Himself " he is trying to express something that neither he nor anyone else can express.'[1] It is indeed difficult not to feel that the Evangelist sometimes hovers on the edge of a Docetic conception of the person of Jesus. What is probably in his mind is the truth that Jesus voluntarily entered into this human experience of the darkness of death.[2]

Jesus brings to men the gift of inward *peace* which He conveyed as His last legacy to men. That peace was a gift that could not be appropriated without receiving the Giver also. He brings to His disciples ' peace ' not ' apathy ' (xiv. 27; xx. 19). It is peace, the fruit of victory, brought by One who has conquered pain, sin, and death. ' Peace ' was the common daily salutation, which in the mouths of wayfaring men had lost much of its original assumption of lurking danger. Jesus remints the word. ' My peace I give unto you ' means that no region of life remains unsubdued. He claims to satisfy the deepest instincts of the human heart, and the deep need for

[1] *The Fourfold Gospel*, Introduction, p. 153.
[2] See further, pp. 237ff. Moffatt, *N.T. Introduction*[3], 526.

deliverance from every self-centred fear. 'Perfect love casteth out fear' (1 John iv. 18).

2. THE STOIC DOCTRINE OF GOD AND MAN

(1) *Men as 'sons' of God*

The Stoic has no other conception of God than as immanent. Zeno, following Heraclitus, identifies the reality that underlies the sensible world as a kind of semi-material mind-stuff, which is in its substance fire. All around the world is an envelope of fiery ether, which is pure and unmixed. In air, water, earth, the elemental fire or *logos* is found, but in a grosser form. It is the soul of everything, and exists in everything. In the souls of men, however, the divine fire remains in its purity. These are sparks of the divine fire. The doctrine of Zeno that men are not only kindred, but consubstantial with God, makes itself felt all through the later Stoic teaching. Men are called 'sons of God'.[1] Each man has a ruling faculty (*syneidēsis*, inadequately translated 'conscience') which by training enables him to have insight into the nature of things, and by which his life is guided.

The Stoic conception of the kinship of man with God is in contrast with the thought of the Fourth Gospel. The Stoics held that there was no real barrier to unfettered communion with God, save moral and intellectual blindness. 'Live with the gods,' says Marcus Aurelius, 'and he does live with the gods who constantly shows to them that his own soul is satisfied with that which is assigned to him.'[2] Here the Fourth Evangelist is implicitly antagonistic. Jesus alone is 'the Son of God'. Men may become '*children* of God', only through the power that Jesus confers (John i. 12; cf. 2 Pet. i. 4). He consistently employs the distinction between 'son' and 'child'. Jesus alone 'sees' what the Father is doing (v. 19; cf. v. 17; viii. 38), and mediates His knowledge to men. He

[1] Epictetus I. ix. 1; Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* xii. 26. 'Every man's intelligence is a god, and an efflux of the deity.'

[2] *Meditations* v. 27.

is said to have *given* to His disciples the word (*logos*) of God (xvii. 14). It is remarkable that John only once uses the plural of *logos* in the Gospel (x. 19). It is as though he wished to avoid the plural *logoi* in face of the Stoic view that men, as well as other phenomena, are *logoi spermatikoi,* seeds of the original *Logos* or universal Reason.[1] Jesus alone is the *Logos* in nature and in action. To the Stoic, sonship is an act of will, the deliberate acceptance by the enlightened man of a relationship that already exists. In John men become 'children of God' by a process of regeneration, through the Spirit (iii. 5ff.). They are begotten 'not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but of God' (i. 13).

It would be rash to say that the rather bewildering, semi-materialistic conception of the Logos, so evident in the Stoic position, is entirely absent in Johannine thought. 'Life' may seem to belong to a sub-spiritual class of ideas. The child of God has within him a divine 'seed' (1 John iii. 9), which keeps him from sin. At the same time we must not think that, if this be so, some strange and startling thing has happened in the New Testament. This conception of 'life' as a kind of higher vital essence has been attributed to a combination of Hebrew and Greek ideas.[2] It may be questioned whether any contribution was needed from the Hellenic side. If we penetrate beneath the religious conception of 'life' or 'spirit' in Hebrew thought, we find that it is never wholly emancipated from the sub-spiritual conception with which it started (e.g. Gen. ii. 7). It appears in Paul, as for instance when he says that God 'shall quicken your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you' (Rom. viii. 11). The 'body of glory' is of a different substance from that which constitutes the earthly body, but it is a substance still (1 Cor. xv. 38ff.). At the same time a clear distinction is drawn between the nature of the terrestrial and the spiritual body. In Jewish mystical thought, a celestial substance, described as 'light' or 'glory', stands over against the terrestrial 'flesh and blood'. 'We shall all be changed' (1 Cor. xv. 51).[3]

[1] Cf. Davidson, *The Stoic Creed*, p. 88.
[2] Scott *FG*, pp. 258ff.
[3] Cf. Odeberg *FG*, pp. 68f.

This solidifying of religious conceptions should not be called materialistic. It is essentially imagery, picture-thinking, which characterizes all Jewish thinking.

(2) *The Demon World*[1]

Another set of ideas influenced the later Stoicism. Mainly through Chaldean and Babylonian influences, the science of Astrology became an integral part of Hellenistic thought. Not only the human soul, but the heavenly bodies themselves are fragments detached from the cosmic fire. They are made of very pure fire, and stand specially near to God. The sun, moon and stars as they gleamed and burned in the sky, were also divinities and living souls. Thus the old gods returned from their banishment by Plato and the earlier Stoics, and brought with them many other spirits. The very names we give now to the stars and planets are proof of the ancient fact. Moreover, the number of the gods was always increasing. There were many self-acting subordinate divinities, with whom men had to reckon. The whole universe hangs together in one great ' system ' which includes ' gods ' and men. There is a natural connexion between the movements of the heavenly bodies and the sufferings and destinies of men. Men's ignorance and perplexity regarding tides and earthquakes, birth and death, the whole range of human destiny, could only result in the despairing belief that they were in the grasp of inscrutable power; not merely an impersonal fate, but a pantheon of divinities whose friendliness was at least doubtful. We can understand the significance of Paul's words in Col. i. 17 when he asserts that in Christ ' all things hang together ' (R.V.m.) or ' cohere '. Without using the name, he implies that Christ is the *Logos*.

Even Judaism itself, during the inter-testamental period and also during the Exile, took over a certain number of Persian and Babylonian astrological beliefs, and it was certainly influenced by them even earlier. Jeremiah protests, in the name of Jehovah, against the offering of cakes and incense to the ' queen of heaven ' by the inhabitants of Jerusalem (vii. 18; xliv. 17). The doctrine of angels, who might be good

[1] Cf. *The Conflict of Religions*, T. R. Glover, pp. 94-109.

or bad, was elaborated in later Judaism, and nothing was strange to it in the doctrine of innumerable demonic influences surrounding the lives of men.

Belief in demonic agencies appears wherever life is insecure.[1] The earlier Stoicism, like modern *laissez-faire*-ism, held the comfortable doctrine that an inherent principle of progress (*logos*) pervades all things. This idea of cosmic government is so impersonal that it allows no intervention in aid of single lives buffeted by circumstance, where a system of spiritual agencies, good or bad, seems to govern 'real' life. A similar 'animism' influences our minds when we isolate say 'war' or 'unemployment' as evil powers to be reckoned with,[2] ignoring unbelief in Christ and disobedience to His will as their origins, and the problem of evil generally. Stoic teaching, like some forms of Christian teaching, that all is ordered for the best and men should be resigned to the will of God made known in laws of nature, is too remote. Pain and evil are realities not to be borne or overcome save by faith in the Logos who is God's will incarnate.

Stoic pantheism could find a place in its system for these demonic agencies. Christianity did not. Jesus is sufficient (p. 107). In Paul's thought the existence of demons ('rulers of this world,' 1 Cor. ii. 8; Rom. viii. 39) is not denied, but their power is neutralized and overcome by Jesus. The personnel of the demon-world is strangely absent in the Fourth Gospel (pp. 162ff.). The phrase 'thou hast a devil' occurs in vii. 20; viii. 48; x. 20f. Satan is the protagonist of evil, and is spoken of as the 'Prince of this world', who enters into Judas (xiii. 27) and is cast out when the Son of Man is crucified, or lifted up (xii. 31; cf. xiv. 30). The pre-eminence of Satan is also recognized in Eph. ii. 2 ('the prince of the power of the air'). While, therefore, in John there is this tendency to return to the earlier Jewish view of a single power of evil, it would seem that in the Prologue there is contained an implicit antagonistic reference to the problem of evil as it was stated according to the metaphysical conception of the later Hellenistic period. What has been called

[1] Cf. Gilbert Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, pp. 178ff.
[2] Cf. *The End of Economic Man*, P. Druecker, Chapter III.

incipient Gnosticism in the Gospel is really due to an outlook upon the growing Hellenistic tendency to personify the forces of nature, and to regard them as having a determining influence upon the fortunes of men. The words of John i. 3 (reading, as in R.V., *all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything that was made*) reaffirm the Jewish point of view regarding creation, and implicitly deny that any of the forces of nature are outside the sovereign activity of the Logos. The 'world' (*kosmos*) in i. 10 means the universe. The 'world' did not know the Logos. The 'rulers of this world', the demonic powers, did not recognize Him as the Lord of glory (1 Cor. ii. 8). They worked their will upon Him on earth, and crucified Him. John speaks of the 'Son of Man who came down from heaven', but, as we have seen, hardly speaks of these intermediate demonic beings. He sweeps them aside without naming them, as Paul does, but with the same kind of challenge, 'Who shall separate us?' (Rom. viii. 35ff.). His challenge, however, is not a passionate outburst, but a calm delineation of the majesty of Jesus upon earth, and especially on the Cross. The Cross is the victorious struggle with the Prince of evil, the ruler of them all (John xii. 31f.).

(3) *Moral and Spiritual Freedom*

Stoicism, like Christianity, recognizes that a certain ethical standard is demanded by the relationship in which men stand as sons of God. Among the later Stoics, and especially in Epictetus, moral wrongdoing is regarded as disloyalty to an unseen Master, who knows our thoughts and whose eye is upon us. 'So live among men,' says Seneca, 'as if the eye of God were upon you.' He also speaks of 'a holy spirit residing in us, the guardian and observer of our good and evil deeds'.[1] These apparently striking parallelisms with Christianity largely disappear when they are tested by the conception of moral freedom in the two systems of thought. Stoic thought is still conditioned and the notion of freedom largely neutralized, by the persistence of the distinction between things that are and things that are not 'in our power'.

[1] Epistles x. xli.

It is far from the thought of 'the glorious liberty of the children of God', and more closely resembles the retreat of the tortoise into its shell. In the Johannine writings, the emphasis on the freedom which attaches, in all its manifestations, to the Christian life is a strong contrast. The most striking expression of it is given in viii. 34-36. It is very apparent that the freedom there spoken of has strong affinities with the thought of St. Paul in Rom. vi. 16-23.

In particular, we may compare the extraordinary freedom in PRAYER which is the prerogative of the Christian (xiv. 13, 14; xv. 7, 16; xvi. 23). The striking statements in the Fourth Gospel, where it is said that there are really no bounds to our freedom in asking, and to the possibilities of prayer 'in Christ's name', have greatly enriched the Christian conception. They are founded on the teaching of Jesus (Matt. vii. 7f.; Luke xi. 9f.). They may be regarded as standing in conscious opposition to the ideas of prayer propagated by the Stoic preachers. The Stoic conception is full of nobility, but the stress is laid on asking for freedom from desire. Prayer for the satisfaction of the desire itself is discouraged. 'The gods,' says Marcus Aurelius, 'either have power, or they have not. If they have not, why pray at all? If they have, why not pray for deliverance from the fear, or the desire, or the pain which the thing causes, rather than for the withholding or the giving of the particular thing? Assuredly, if they can help men at all, this is the way of help. But perhaps you will say, "The gods have put all that in my own power." Then, is it not better to exercise your power and remain free, rather than to be set on what is not in your power, and become a slave and a cringer? And who told you that the gods do not assist us even to what is in our own power? Begin there with your prayers, and you will see. Instead of "Rid me of my enemy!" pray you against desire for the riddance. Instead of "Spare my little one!" pray you that your fears may be at rest. Be this the direction of your prayers, and watch what comes.'[1]

[1] I have quoted from the translation given by Professor Davidson (*The Stoic Creed*, p. 234). See also (ib. p. 235f.) an excellent translation of Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus.

In the Fourth Gospel the Christian conception of absolute freedom in prayer is guarded from confusion by the qualification that all prayer must be 'in the name of' Jesus. Complete freedom in prayer must be asserted, in view of our relationship with God as 'children of God', and inasmuch as it is a personal relationship. The things we ask for, however, are determined by our characters, and the nobility of our interests. In other words, our prayers are determined by our spiritual environment, and by our response to it. There are some environments and preoccupations that are hostile to Christian prayer. They are incompatible with being 'in Christ' or with prayer 'in the name' of Christ. At the same time, we are taught to pray by praying. Even the right of experiment in prayer and the consequent personal discipline that ensues, must be asserted if the freedom of the children of God is to be preserved.[1] That is why some prayer seems to be unanswered. If the doctrine of freedom in prayer is dangerous, the danger is shared by all great doctrines. Granted that the quotation from Marcus Aurelius represents fairly the Stoic doctrine of prayer, noble and instructive as it is, there is a great deal of modern Stoicism from which deliverance is needed.[2]

Something may be said here in regard to the Johannine doctrine of SIN, a question that naturally arises in connexion with moral freedom. It has been contended that, in the Johannine writings, 'sin is conceived not as a positive principle, but as a privation, a limitation. . . . To the mind of John, sin in itself involves no moral culpability. . . . Sin in itself is a mere privation, and only assumes the darker character when the freedom offered through Christ is refused. Man by nature is,' according to the Johannine conception, 'shut out from the true life, and is incapable of the higher knowledge and activity. Like the dwellers in Plato's cave (and the analogy, in view of John's relation to Greek thought, is

[1] Dr. John Brown is recorded once to have heard Dr. Candlish preach in Edinburgh on prayer. His comment was as follows: 'It was splendid; he first made you feel that you could ask for anything, a five-pound note, and then he dared you to have any overmastering wish but "Thy will be done"' (Letters li).

[2] See further, pp. 283ff.

more than accidental), he remains in a world of illusion until he is set free, and born from above into the true world of light. Moral ideas do not, at least primarily, have any part in the conception.'[1] If this account of the Johannine doctrine of sin is accepted, it involves a most serious compromise with Hellenistic thought on the subject of moral evil. Stoicism taught that vice was simply the result of ignorance or evil environment, and sprang from disordered or uncontrolled passions (Epictetus, *Dissertations* iv. 1). Stoicism began by denying the Platonic dualism, expressed in the doctrine that the body is the tomb of the soul. In its later stages it was compelled to accept its readmission, and revoke its former teaching of the identity of body and soul. 'Thou art a little soul, bearing about a corpse, as Epictetus used to say' (Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* iv. 41). The soul, being of immortal nature, longed for deliverance from the body. Sin, therefore, is really due to the environment of the body. Moral culpability consists in ignorance and weakness rather than in an offence against God. The Johannine view of sin cannot fairly be regarded as having anything at all in common with teaching of this kind. The sinner is the 'slave' of sin (viii. 34). Forgiveness of sin is the final message of Jesus to His Church (xx. 23).

The Johannine view of sin has much in common with the Pauline view. In the teaching of Paul, the 'flesh' is not only the substance of the body, but is a synonym for the earthly life, human nature untouched by grace. The flesh is the seat of sin, but the life in the flesh may be lived 'in the faith of the Son of God' (Gal. ii. 20). It harbours a power of evil, which does not, properly speaking, make itself felt as a 'law' (in our sense of natural law), but rather as an authority, which has usurped its place by consent of man. 'I see another law (or 'authority') in my members' is a deeper perception than the Stoic. The question of sin is one of conflicting loyalties. In redemption a man passes from the service of sin to the service of God. 'Henceforth I call you not slaves . . . but . . . friends' (John xv. 15). For Paul, the authority of sin is shattered in the Cross of Christ (Rom. vi. 16ff.). The

[1] Scott *FG.* 219-21.

authority of Christ over the sinner is based not only on his acceptance of the fact that sin is condemned in the flesh, but on the constraint exercised upon his heart by the love of Christ, 'who loved me and gave Himself for me'. Paul is developing his doctrine in opposition to antinomianism. John develops his in opposition to the Hellenic doctrine that sin is just ignorance, or due to the physical influence of the body, which accounts for the apparent absence of certain features in it that are prominent in Paul. Sin, John contends, is not ignorance, but distrust, and refusal of loyalty, obedience and love to Jesus Christ. Jesus is the supreme revelation of God's nature and purpose. 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' Sin is rebellion against the Father's love, where love is to be interpreted not in terms of sentiment but of purpose. That is why sin in the Fourth Gospel appears so exclusively as want of faith in Jesus Christ. There is no lack of passages in the Gospel indicating that sin is not negative, but positive; not mere moral privation, but moral culpability. It consists not only in distrust of Jesus and refusal to 'receive' Him, but is itself the cause of these things (iii. 20f.). Jesus is 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world'. 'Men loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil' (iii. 19). Numerous passages to the same effect may be gathered from the First Epistle, where, as is quite to be expected from its strong ethical character, the emphasis on the positive nature of sin is stronger than in the Gospel (e.g. i. 7-9; ii. 11; iii. 4). It is reasonable to suppose that the Johannine idea of sin as consisting in an incapacity to 'know' Jesus for what He is, has an outlook on the Hellenistic notion that to know God is to be free from moral disability; that this knowledge is the result of a development of natural capacity; that a man in doing good, acts conformably not only to nature, but to *his* real nature. 'The virtuous man fulfils the law of his own being.'[1] Sin is in the New Testament not just a 'miss' or 'a false note struck in the harmony of the universe'. A false note ceases to be when its vibrations cease. Not so in the Johannine Gospel. 'Your sin remains' (ix. 41). 'Ye shall die in your sins' (viii. 24).

[1] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* ix. 42; cf. Epictetus, *Dissertations* iii. 24.

These aspects, then, of human sonship and its corollaries, human freedom and deliverance from fear, so strongly emphasized in this Gospel, can only be regarded as developed in opposition to some such environment as we have attempted to sketch. The greatest practical defect in the Stoic system of morality is that it is only possible for the enlightened, and has no pity for the common man. It is the prerogative of the 'wise', not of the 'foolish'; and the vast majority of men, according to the Stoic, belong to the latter class.[1] The Johannine 'whosoever' and 'whatsoever', an impossible and unwarrantable conception for the Stoic (John iii. 16; v. 22; xii. 32, 47), is the Christian charter of freedom even for the 'foolish'.[2]

III. The Mystery Religions

One important result of the instability and decay of the older 'state-religions' of Greece, where, previous to the conquests of Alexander, each city was a state and had its own patron deity, was that the individual was driven in on himself. The older Bacchic and Orphic sects which existed centuries before showed that this feeling was already there, but in the later Greek world it became more general. 'A feeling came over men, and suddenly the familiar universe seemed a strange place, terrifying in its enormous magnitude—the earth stretching into regions of unexplored possibilities, moved and shaken by inhuman forces, and over all the silent enigma of the wheeling stars. They awoke, as it were, to find themselves lost in the streets of a huge strange city.'[3] Religion became the affair of the individual and of smaller groups.

Stoicism failed to meet the situation. According to the later Stoic doctrine, only the purified soul winged its way through the various spheres of the universe, until it arrived at that bliss of which Posidonius speaks, the bliss of 'watching the stars go round'. What he really implies is that the

[1] Cf. Davidson, *The Stoic Creed*, pp. 156f.

[2] On the question whether the later Stoics made any concessions to human weakness and incapacity, see Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 173, and Bevan, *Stoics and Sceptics*, p. 73, who take different points of view. On Stoicism in the Roman Empire, see T. R. Glover, *The Conflict of Religions*, Chapter II.

[3] Bevan, *Stoics and Sceptics*, p. 92.

movements of the heavenly bodies are intimately connected with the sufferings and destinies of men. He means that the purified soul is now taught everything about the 'causes of things', and is at rest. 'Happy is he,' says Virgil, 'who is able to trace the causes of things, and who has cast beneath his feet all fears, and inexorable destiny, and the noise of greedy Acheron.'[1]

How and when is this blissful condition attained? The soul 'who in the body had retained its purity flew instantly on being liberated to the region of the pure stars, cleaving the gross atmosphere like a shaft of flame. But the others, more or less weighed down by the foulness they had contracted in the body, rose only till they reached an air of their own quality. There they remained floating till their substance regained its clearness and they too could mount beyond the moon. But some were so burdened with uncleanness that they were pulled back again into new bodies and once more experienced passion and pain. That was how they were punished. For the only real hell was found here on this earth, and the impure were ever drawn back into it anew.'[2] This process of purification might be endlessly repeated. A soul might pass through ten thousand births, ere it landed on the shore, and reached the goal of all its striving.[3]

The position was further complicated by the belief that the universe itself has only a temporary existence. Its history is contained in an infinite and unvarying series of cycles, each of which is ended by a great conflagration. Then comes a 'regeneration' or rebirth of all things, and a new cycle commences. 'The exact same incidents and events come round in one cycle as had happened in the previous cycles: the same people, the same experience, the same history and achievements, the same failures are reproduced—inexorable fate and dire necessity rule all.'[4]

In other words, individual men felt themselves in dire

[1] *Georgics* ii. 490-2.
[2] Bevan, *Stoics and Sceptics*, pp. 104-9; Gilbert Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, pp. 181ff.
[3] Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid* vi. 724ff.
[4] Cf. Davidson, *The Stoic Creed*, p. 91.

need of salvation',[1] security, deliverance. Christianity did not create, but found this demand for salvation when it entered upon its missionary activity. The need expressed itself as a longing for divine help and for a blessed life after death. The word 'salvation' is never used in the Fourth Gospel; 'eternal life' takes its place. That is probably because the term 'salvation' (*sōtēria*) had come to be connected so exclusively with pagan religion. 'Salvation' meant that a man was enabled to make a 'good death' when his time came. The idea of salvation, however, is strongly marked in the Fourth Gospel. Words like 'keep', 'peace', 'joy', are characteristic. 'None shall pluck them out of the Father's hand.'

The Mystery-religions sought to meet this cry for personal salvation. What is a Mystery-religion? In the Hellenistic age a great cosmopolitan population began to fill the cities, following trade wherever it went. Captives, taken in war, were settled as slaves in the country districts. These people—Phoenicians, Ionians, Phrygians, Syrians, Greeks—brought their own gods with them and the appropriate rites for worship. Attis, Serapis, Isis, Osiris, and others were names that began to be familiar in town and country. These were 'gods' and therefore were immortal and indestructible. Men and women longing for 'salvation' began to seek immortality, 'life eternal', by some form of communion with one of these, in order that the divine essence might become part of themselves. Any god would do; for all gods are immortal. Thus would be provided a way of escape from the daily ills, vicissitudes and circumstances of present-day life. After death, at least, a mortal who at the moment felt himself the prey of unheeding and inhuman forces, might even now have the assurance that he was not doomed to be for ever merely a bubble on the ocean of humanity, destined only to break and disappear. There was no thought of victory over and in this present world (cf. John xvi. 33). The mood is one of escape. The Stoic doctrine of the wanderings of the soul appealed

[1] The goddess in the Isis-mystery is said to transplant the initiate into a new life of 'salvation', or as it is elsewhere put, 'to allow him to enter into her kingdom'. This is equivalent to being 'born again'.

only to the enlightened and the elect. 'Apathy' was too lofty an achievement for the ordinary man. The aim of the mystery worshipper is by means of certain cult ceremonies, lustrations, and secret rites, accompanied by dramatic representations of scenes in the life of the god, to induce a condition of ecstasy in which the god finally appears to him in vision, and a mystical union with the divine is attained.[1]

Another type of Mystery-religion is found in what is known as the Hermetic literature. No cult ceremony is indicated. The writings may be described as containing the devotional literature of mystical paganism. They are philosophical in type, but also contain a strong admixture of magical ideas. The devout user of these prayers and incantations is expected to have the same experience of union with the divine as the worshipper of the Mystery-cults. The principal Hermetic document is entitled *Poimandres*, from the name of the god whose revelation it is intended to convey. Like the rest of the Hermetic literature, it is Egyptian in origin, but its contents owe much to other sources. Judaism itself made a strong contribution. Egypt became the religious clearing-house of the Eastern world.[2]

A great deal has been written on the bearing of the Mystery-religion literature, particularly on the writings of Paul and the Fourth Gospel. It must be remembered that this field of study belongs to the region of the expert, and the expert must also be one who knows his New Testament. Any suggestion of borrowing on the part of New Testament writers from the thought of the Mystery-religions must be closely scrutinized in the light of a clear conception of New Testament religion. The New Testament writers always transform what they borrow. Serious blunders have already been made. Similarity of language has been mistaken for similarity of thought. There has also been a tendency to speak of one common 'mystery-religion' rather than, as it should be, of 'mystery-religions'. It is just as misleading to talk to-day of Christian-

[1] A description of an initiation ceremony, given by Apuleius, will be found in Kennedy *PMR*, pp. 100ff.

[2] Cf. pp. 299f. on the *Prayer of Poimandres*. A very complete analysis and exposition of the thought of *Poimandres* and of its bearing on Biblical ideas will be found in *The Bible and the Greeks* by C. H. Dodd, pp. 99-248.

ity and the 'modern mind', seeing that there is really no 'modern mind' on the subject of religion, but rather a collection of 'modern minds'. Similarly there was no amalgamated pagan religious thought in the first century. Moreover, evidence derived from writers of the second and third century is not always good testimony to the conditions of thought in the first century. 'The curious amalgam which goes by the name of the "theology of the mysteries", falls to pieces when it is confronted by the original texts (J. A. Robinson).' This last verdict I have quoted from a timely essay on the subject of 'Christianity and the Mystery-Religions' by Professor Rawlinson in his *The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ* (pp. 270ff.). Readers are further recommended to consult such an important work as *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions* by H. A. A. Kennedy; also the article 'Mysteries', in Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (IX, pp. 72-82).[1] We must also understand that the term 'mystery' in the New Testament has a meaning almost the opposite of that attached to it in the Hellenistic usage. In the latter it means a secret revelation which must not be communicated to anyone but a fellow initiate or member of the group. In the New Testament, 'mystery' never denotes an esoteric rite which the worshipper is pledged to keep inviolably secret, but the great truths of the Christian faith which could never be known had not God willed to make them known. These are to be declared to all the world, that has ears to hear. (Eph. iii. 1ff.; vi. 19; Col. i. 25ff.; iv. 3. On the usage in Mark iv. 11 consult a good commentary.) It is noticeable that a verb meaning 'disclosure' or 'revelation' usually accompanies the word in the New Testament.

With these provisos in our minds, the subject may be approached. The worshipper in the final stage is said to be 'initiated'. The rite might be repeated, and thereby the immortal nature of the particular god was transferred to the worshipper. It cannot be denied, on the one hand, that varying shades and qualities of faith and moral earnestness might be produced. On the other hand, it is certain that the rites were often accompanied by moral licence and neurotic ecstasy.

[1] Also, *Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge* (Bevan), 83.

'Greek polytheism had always been weak in moral content. . . . Neither Demeter nor Isis was very squeamish.' The moral content of purification and 'holiness' depend on the conception of what constitutes 'sin'. The meaning of 'sin' depends on the conception of God.[1]

There are certain remarkable similarities of expression between the New Testament and the language of the Mysteries. The initiated man is the *saved* man. By lustrations, sacred meals, ascetic practices, mystic experiences, the 'initiate' has attained and become *perfect*.[2] He *knows*, has become possessed of *gnosis*, or knowledge, has become a 'gnostic'.[3] His knowledge is not a mere intellectual knowledge. It transcends the limits of the intellect. It is a mystical experience which has as its basis a real union and merging of being with the god of the mystery. The initiate did not hesitate to describe himself as 'deified'. Thus is he *saved*. Originally the individual soul is a spark of the Divine, and this essential being is here and now made real. The state of soul, otherwise obtained through countless rebirths, is reached now. Sometimes the initiate is spoken of as *the image of God, the son of God*. In a sense he *is* God. Having thus become deified, he has obtained *eternal* life. The *seeds* of immortality are in him. He has *seen* the Divine face to face, and the vision is not death, but life. His soul is purified, sometimes by repeated initiations, and at death will escape without hindrance or fear to the upper region where God is. Sometimes the initiate is described, symbolically, as being *born again* (p. 136), a term, however, that is common to all mystical systems of thought, ancient and modern. The initiate is also said to have received the divine glory. He has been *glorified* or *enlightened* (cf. John i. 9), a foretaste of the glory yet to come. In the same mystic experience, his soul is said to *ascend to heaven* (cf. John iii. 13). By his *knowledge* he receives *power* (the very word in John i. 12, *exousia*) to become

[1] Cf. T. R. Glover, *Paul of Tarsus*, p. 133. Pages 131-137 of this work should be consulted.

[2] The terms in italics are all terms used in the mystery-religions.

[3] The later Gnosticism was a developed philosophical system; but 'gnostic' was used in the mystery cults to describe the initiated man. The noun *gnōsis* (knowledge) is never used in the Fourth Gospel, but 'to know' God is frequent.

sinless and holy like God. As *born again*, he obtains *power* over nature, and in prayer can bend to his will heaven, earth, and natural forces (cf. John xiv. 14; xv. 7). Actually the word *logos* is used to describe the spiritual essence that enters into the worshipper at the *second birth*.

In the Osiris and other cults there was a dramatic and symbolic representation of the death and resurrection of the god. Thereby their original significance is disclosed. They were originally rites based upon the natural phenomena of autumn, winter, and the coming of spring, and intended to promote fertility of the earth. Later undoubtedly deeper ideas were attached to them, and the mystic drama created a passionate sympathy with a god who had passed through the dark experience of death, and himself been restored to life as indeed he must, being a god and naturally immortal. Initiation is a mystic absorption of his experience. 'As truly as Osiris lives shall he live.' The notion that there underlies this aspect of the worship the idea of a redeemer-god, is an illusion.[1] The significance for the initiates of the resurrection of Attis is thus described by the priest: 'Be of good cheer, initiates, the god has been saved: thus for you also shall there be salvation from your troubles.'[2] A 'redeemer-god' cannot himself be among the saved (cf. Mark xv. 30f).[3]

[1] Cf. G. Murray, *Five Stages*, pp. 51f., 196. [2] Kennedy *PMR*, p. 208.

[3] After a searching analysis of the various stories of dying gods in world religions, Professor A. J. Toynbee (*A Study of History*, vol. vi, pp. 276ff.) points out that in these pagan stories the god dies by compulsion and not by choice, sometimes in bitterness and despair, never in love, whatever the benefits his death may bring to men. His death did not bring the same consolation outside the sphere of the Mystery-religions. He quotes these words from an elegy on the death of Orpheus by Antipater of Sidon (*c.* 90 B.C.): 'Why do we mortals make lament over the deaths of our sons, seeing that the gods themselves have not power to keep death from laying his hand upon their children?' The gods cannot satisfy their own dearest wishes, and feeble mortals can only take up the attitude of dull resignation, when similar sorrow visits them. Professor Toynbee draws attention to the contrast of the Christian conception as expressed in John iii. 16. There God's purpose of redeeming love is the free divine motive for the death of Christ, who accepts with equal freedom that motive as his own. There is no bitterness or constraint, but only infinite Divine generosity springing from the Divine nature itself. From this sacrifice man learns that the world is overcome, and is able to light his own lamp of Christian love and pity. Unlike the pagan god, Christ sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied, and 'the pleasure of the Lord is upon him'. The uniqueness of the conception expressed in John iii. 16 at once appears.

No one can fail to be struck, in reading the account of mystery terminology just given, with the extraordinary similarity of expression to much of the thought in the Fourth Gospel. At the same time we must beware of forgetting three things. *First*, that pre-Christian Judaism itself had been influenced both by Oriental and Greek religious thought; *secondly*, that in the main stream of pure Judaism there is an element of mystical thought; *thirdly*, that Jewish religious ideas are clearly laid under contribution at least by the Hermetic religious writings.[1] We may therefore be prepared to find that Johannine similarities of language may often be due to the influence of the common source in Judaism and are indirect. To *know* God, for example, is an idea that lies at the root of the experience of the prophets. They, too, *saw* God. God spoke even to Moses 'face to face, as a man speaketh with his friend' (Exod. xxxiii. 11). We need only recall Isaiah's vision, or Hosea's language, 'I will betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord' (ii. 20), or Ps. lxxiii. 23-26, to see that a certain type of mysticism was not foreign to Jewish thought.[2] No word is more misused to-day than the term 'mysticism'. The traditional mystical experience is complete absorption of personality in God, and utter inability to express in words all that happened in the mystical state. Yet the Old Testament prophets and New Testament writers are able to describe their experiences. Paul was capable of ecstatic states, but attaches no great importance to them. There is no reference to his conversion experience in 2 Cor. xii. 1-5, and he puts on another plane altogether the voice he heard in answer to his prayer in *vv.* 8, 9. The sense of a personal relationship is not submerged.

One of the chief reasons why Christianity triumphed over the Mystery-religions, and why it did not need to borrow anything essential from them was that the Founder of the Christian Church was an actual historical personality. Isis, Demeter, Orpheus never lived. They were personified natural forces. As actual personal beings they were never seen and known. In them, humanity had projected its own sorrows

[1] C. H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks*, Chapter XII.
[2] Cf. Kennedy *PMR*, pp. 33ff.

and needs on the face of pitiless Nature—a 'pathetic fallacy'. In Euripides' play, *The Trojan Women*, Helen lays the responsibility for her sin on Aphrodite. Hecuba tells her that Aphrodite is but another name for her own passion:

> Ah, deck not out thine own heart's evil springs
> By making spirits of heaven as brutal things,
> And cruel.[1]

What men did with 'evil springs' of their hearts, they did also with their fairer hopes and longings. The gods who sympathized were creations as illusory as the gods who tempted.

What must it have meant to men thus groping, perplexed, and afraid in a vast universe, in the presence of the hurtful and hateful things of life, to hear the new message that God had actually manifested Himself in a human personality, had 'become flesh'? Jesus hungered and thirsted and was tempted; was the Son of God from heaven, revealing heaven's deepest secrets, through whom all things were made and governed. He had returned thither, still remaining in living touch with all 'who believe in His name', giving assurance of an eternal life that begins here and now. In Him the mystery of heaven was declared in one open secret, 'the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man' (i. 51). Christianity is an historical religion, sprung from an historical person. It was also rooted in Judaism, a religion that had preserved the record and the experience of a God who had guided the history of a chosen nation. It originated in a person, whom men knew and loved. The Evangelist, in words that can only have in mind the unsatisfied heart of the worshipper of the Mystery-religions, says, 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' The word 'declared' is the word used of the 'mystagogue' who directed the words and movements of the pagan worshipper, or of the hierophant who explained the ceremonies. Jesus has made God manifest for all, and there is none other. 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.'

[1] ll. 981-2. Tr. Gilbert Murray.

CHAPTER VI

CONSTRUCTION AND AUTHORSHIP

I. The Construction of the Gospel

vii. 53–viii. 11 is unanimously regarded as an insertion introduced into the text of the Gospel from some other source. It is omitted in all the uncial manuscripts, except Codex Bezae. This manuscript belongs to the fifth century, and its inclusion of the passage in question shows that at least as early as the fifth century it was found necessary to fill up a gap in the narrative. The scribe responsible may have felt that the story, whose authenticity there is no reason to doubt, would serve as an illustration of the procedure criticized by Nicodemus in vii. 51. The story appears also in a few fifth century Old Latin manuscripts, and in Jerome's Vulgate.

Chapter xxi is by many regarded as an appendix to the Gospel written by another hand. The arguments will be found on pp. 88f., 333f.

Dr. Moffatt's Translation has familiarized English readers with the results of the theory that certain passages in the Gospel have somehow become displaced from their original position in the text. Dr. Moffatt has attempted to rearrange most of the passages in question. The student is referred to Dr. W. F. Howard's *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation* (pp. 125-141), where a full and detailed treatment is given of the whole problem, and tribute is paid to those scholars who have investigated the question. A list of these suggested dislocations is now given.

1. iii. 22-30. The suggestion is that this passage should be inserted between ii. 12 and ii. 13. The arguments are that (*a*) in its present situation, the passage is an interruption of the expository meditation which follows the conversation with Nicodemus; (*b*) if this new position is accepted, we have

an itinerary from Capernaum (ii. 12) through Judaea to Jerusalem, where the Cleansing of the Temple takes place.

2. By inserting chapter vi between chapters iv and v, we obtain a geographical sequence. The healing at Bethesda in chapter v takes place in Jerusalem. In iv. 54 Jesus is in Galilee. The scene of chapter vi. is Galilee. In vii. 1 Jesus is represented as again in Galilee in order to escape danger.

3. vii. 15-24. It is proposed to place this section at the end of chapter v. Verse 15 follows naturally on v. 39-47, and in *v.* 24 there is a reference to a miracle of healing, most appropriately identified with the miracle of chapter v. Also a better sequence of thought is obtained if vii. 25 follows vii. 14.

4. x. 19-29 it is suggested should be transferred to the end of chapter ix. x. 21 recalls the miracle of the previous chapter. x. 26-29 would be an appropriate introduction to the discourse on the Good Shepherd. (On the other hand, it is doubtful whether the sequence x. 18, 30 is better than the sequence in the text.)

5. The story of Peter's Denial in chapter xviii is interrupted by the examination before the high priest. Various rearrangements have been suggested. Reasons for retaining the present arrangement are given in the exposition of the passage (p. 310).

6. Should chapters xv, xvi be transferred to a position before chapter xiv? 'Arise, let us go hence' in xiv. 31 indicates that the discourse is at an end. It is pointed out that the words of xiv. 30, 'Henceforth I will not talk much with you', are hardly consistent with the position of the two long chapters that follow. Also in xvi. 5 Jesus says, 'None of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?' although we have precisely these questions asked in xiii. 36 and xiv. 5. These difficulties, however, can be surmounted without disturbing the present order of the chapters. (See pp. 271ff.)

There is no manuscript evidence for any of these suggested rearrangements. The arguments in their favour are based on the hypothesis that at some time certain pages have been accidentally removed from their original place. It is contended that if the number of letters are counted, for example, in vii. 15-24, it will be found that each of the rest of

the transposed passages would contain either the same or a multiple of the number of letters in the passage just mentioned. The inference is drawn that each of the transposed passages would thus represent either a page or a number of pages of the original manuscript. The lacuna filled by vii. 53–viii. 11 would represent a page entirely lost. The manuscript would consist of papyrus leaves, either doubled like the quires of a modern book and sewn together to form a codex, or would be pasted together so as to form a long papyrus roll. The sewing or the paste would give way, and when the manuscript was repaired, it is conjectured that pages were displaced.

This theory of dislocations has at present considerable support. In the two cases (1, 2) where an improved itinerary would be provided, the argument has a certain weight, but not sufficient in my opinion to warrant transposition. This Evangelist is not interested in itineraries. In the other cases where it is contended that the sequence of thought is improved by rearrangement, the argument is even more precarious. The Evangelist has a habit of interrupting the immediate flow of his thought. Note the two sudden references to the Baptist in the Prologue. A stronger case than the others can be made out for the transposition of vii. 15-24, and for convenience of exposition, the section has been inserted after v. 47.

Various scholars have endeavoured to trace the work of a Redactor or Editor. For a summary of these theories, see Appendix C of Dr. Howard's work.[1] All attempts, however, to discover the work of different hands in the Gospel, have reached hardly any agreement, and are open to the charge of oversubtlety.[2] Both redaction and dislocation theories assume that the Gospel was left in a completed state by the author, which is far from certain. The suggestion is most attractive that 'we have the unfinished pages of the Gospel, almost as the Evangelist left them, in varying stages of revision, for the

[1] *FGRC*, pp. 258ff.

[2] As one who has made the attempt, I would like to state frankly that, after further reflection on the style and thought of the Evangelist, I have abandoned my own theory of redaction, adopted in previous editions of this book, and described in *The Fourth Evangelist*, Chapter III.

most part grouped according to the writer's chronological design, but imperfectly arranged, and awaiting his final revision.'[1] How much or how little the present text of the Gospel owes to subsequent revision by another hand, it is difficult to say. There are signs of revision in iv. 1-4 and vi. 22-24. In both cases, the attempt is clearly made to give greater coherence to the narrative. In the latter passage, the attempt is somewhat clumsily made. vi. 2 might be inserted in order to explain the presence of the crowd that has mysteriously gathered. The presence of the crowd is otherwise explained, somewhat strangely, in verse 4. (See the exposition.) In both passages parenthesis is employed (iv. 2; vi. 23) showing signs of a desire to correct a wrong impression, and in both there is the use of the title 'the Lord' for Jesus which does not appear elsewhere in the Gospel, except in xxi. 7. The same hand may also perhaps be detected in the forward reference to a story not yet told in xi. 2.

II. Authorship

The Beloved Disciple

Reference is made to an unnamed disciple 'whom Jesus loved' in xiii. 23, xix. 26, xx. 2, and in xxi. 7. It is certain that John, son of Zebedee, is meant; also that in all probability, of the two disciples mentioned in i. 35-40, one of which is unnamed, the latter must be John. This disciple would otherwise remain without mention in the Gospel, an inconceivable omission. It is not so certain that the unnamed disciple known to the high priest in xviii. 15 is to be identified with John, son of Zebedee. The mention of this disciple has an important bearing on the question of authorship and will be dealt with later (pp. 84ff).

How are we to account for the strange reticence of the Evangelist regarding the actual name of the Beloved Disciple? The traditional theory is that he is thus referring to himself and is the son of Zebedee, but that, as the author of the Gospel, he keeps himself in the background. Yet the terms

[1] Howard *FGRC*, pp. 132f.

of such a reference can scarcely be called modest. It is a much simpler interpretation to suppose that the author of the Gospel is referring to someone other than himself. Then the epithet 'whom Jesus loved' becomes intelligible. The author is referring to another who stood in a very intimate relationship to Jesus, was regarded as a disciple who understood the mind of Jesus, and had His confidence in a very special degree. The most probable conjecture is that the Beloved Disciple must also have been an intimate friend of the author of the Gospel, and that the Evangelist owed to him —as Philemon did to Paul—'his own soul'. He had been his own intimate friend and teacher, whose deep spiritual insight and knowledge of Jesus had aroused a kindred experience in the heart of his friend. In describing him as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved', he does not suggest that Jesus showed an affection for one particular disciple as distinct from the others. The Evangelist speaks of His love for them all (xiii. i). The isolation and supremacy given to this disciple is largely the product of the Evangelist's own heart.[1] The relationship was similar to that between Mark and Peter, Luke and Paul. The Evangelist does not leave us without a fuller and clearer glimpse of that fullness of Christian experience which is described in the title he gives to his old friend. 'He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him' (xiv. 21). May not these words be taken as a description of the Beloved Disciple? In the experience of the Evangelist, this teacher was one in whom the promise had been fulfilled. 'We will come unto him and make our abode with him' (xiv. 23).

Yet these references are much more than an acknowledgment of personal spiritual indebtedness. They are made also in order to secure the validity and authority of the Gospel itself. Reminiscences of the Apostle's preaching, written memoirs, personal talks may well have given the Evangelist much material. He may have found himself in the same position as Paul, whose authority was questioned because he had not belonged to the original disciple band. Paul is always careful to assert along with his claim to an independent com-

[1] Cf. Streeter *FGG*, p. 432.

mission as an apostle, his close dependence on the traditions of the primitive community (1 Cor. xv. 3). This Evangelist claims the special authority of the Beloved Disciple for the traditions he employs. In one place he speaks of him as a reliable 'witness' (xix. 35). Inasmuch as the personality of this disciple remained an integral part of his own life and experience, a control was set on the free creative activity of his own mind. For this Evangelist, through his living contact with the Beloved Disciple, the vision and witness of the immediate disciples of Jesus remained as a permanent element in his presentation of the Church's faith (cf. 1 Ep. i. 1-3).

THE DISCIPLE WHO WAS 'KNOWN TO THE HIGH PRIEST'

In xviii. 15, 16 we are introduced to 'another disciple' who was the means of admitting Peter to the courtyard of the high priest's palace, and is described as 'known to the high priest'. He evidently had sufficient authority to secure Peter's admission, which a member of the twelve is not likely to have possessed. Whence did he derive it? The word translated 'known to' (*gnōstos*) is used in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament as meaning 'familiar friend' (2 Kings x. 11; Ps. lv. 13f.; Job xix. 14). It is translated 'acquaintance' in Luke ii. 44, xxiii. 49, meaning 'acquaintances'. This 'disciple' therefore must have had a fairly intimate standing with Caiaphas and his entourage. Was he therefore, not himself a priest, but some lay member of a priestly family in Jerusalem?[1] This fact would account for the Evangelist's remarkably accurate information as to what went on at meetings of the Sanhedrin (vii. 45-52; xi. 47-53; xii. 10ff.).

An early tradition exists, preserved by Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus (end of second century), that John, 'who lay upon the breast of the Lord', 'had been a priest and worn the high-priest's mitre', was 'both witness and teacher', and was

[1] This theory, first propounded by Delff, a German scholar in the end of the last century, is examined by Sanday, *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 17, 100ff.

buried at Ephesus.[1] Although this statement plainly identifies this disciple with the Beloved Disciple, there is good reason to suppose that Polycrates does not identify the 'John' whom he mentions with John, son of Zebedee.[2] No authority attaches to Polycrates' statement that this John had actually been a priest. This might easily be a later traditional development of the fact that he was a member of a priestly family. The important point is that the statement of Polycrates implies a tradition as early as about A.D. 190 that a certain disciple of Jesus named John had once a close connexion with priestly circles.

The Evangelist can only mean by the brief cryptic reference, twice repeated, 'another disciple', to distinguish him from the Beloved Disciple. It is interesting to compare a similar cryptic reference in Mark xiv. 51, where Mark speaks of 'a certain young man' who, in the Garden, escaped with difficulty, leaving his outer garment in the hands of a member of the force which had come to arrest Jesus. The scene has been compared to an artist's signature on the border of a picture (sometimes a miniature picture), and it is generally supposed that Mark is alluding to himself. Does the Fourth Evangelist here similarly refer to himself as 'another disciple'?

The wording of xviii. 15 does not imply that Peter and the anonymous disciple accompanied one another to the door. The latter *entered in with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.* Jesus would be accompanied by a guard of temple police. Was he the officer in charge of the guard, or a member of it? Here we are in the region of pure conjecture but by no means of improbability. It is remarkable that the Evangelist knows the name of the man, Malchus, whose ear Peter had injured. He knows that one of the servants of the high priest was his kinsman (*v.* 26). Was he present at the arrest? Was he already one who was a 'secret' disciple of Jesus, and did he on that account use his influence to secure Peter's admission to the courtyard, having overheard the altercation between the latter and the woman in charge of the door?

[1] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, v. 24.
[2] Burkitt *GHT*, pp. 251f.

If this unnamed disciple belonged to the priestly circle, he would be a layman belonging to the Sadducean party. The priestly entourage was Sadducean, and posts in connexion with the Temple would no doubt be reserved for lay members of their own party. The party included many besides those who held priestly office. The theory that the Fourth Evangelist was originally a member of the Sadducean party, first propounded by Burkitt,[1] deserves much more attention than it has yet received. Burkitt points out that the name 'Sadducee' is never mentioned in the Gospel, probably because the Evangelist regarded it rather as a nickname than as a real appellation.[2] In Acts xxiii. 8 we are told that the Sadducees held that 'there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit'. The Sadducees rejected, along with the Pharisaic oral tradition, the new beliefs in 'angels' and 'demons' which, largely through Persian influence, had entered into the popular religion. They were conservative, and only beliefs and observances derived from the written Torah are obligatory.[3] It is remarkable that no stories of exorcism are found in this Gospel. The reason may be that they were uncongenial to the mind of an erstwhile Sadducee.[4] The Sadducees' rejection of the doctrine of resurrection was also connected with their dislike of a belief that had no authoritative place in traditional Judaism. In this Gospel we find strong emphasis on the Christian belief that resurrection for the individual is possible only through Jesus Christ (vi. 40, 44; xi. 23ff.), as though the writer himself had only been brought to this belief through his knowledge of Jesus. It has also been contended that the legal disputes in the Gospel breathe the spirit of the Sadducee rather than the Pharisee. The Pharisaic attitude towards the giving of medical help on the Sabbath was more liberal than that of the Sadducees. The

[1] *GHT*, p. 248.

[2] The origin of the name is obscure. See Shailer Matthews, *New Testament Times in Palestine* (new and revised edition), pp. 81ff.

[3] Josephus, A. xiii. 10, 6; xviii. 1, 4. Much of what Josephus says about the religious beliefs of Pharisees and Sadducees is influenced by the desire to interpret these in the light of Greek philosophy.

[4] Also, no doubt, because exorcists had no good reputation in Ephesus (Acts xix. 13ff.). Jewish exorcism was highly esteemed by Hellenistic magicians. (Knox, *St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles*, pp. 208ff.)

opponents of Jesus seem to represent the more rigid Sadducean attitude. Some Pharisees would probably have agreed with Jesus' argument in vii. 22f. (see notes).[1] The Sadducee was also uninterested in the doctrine of another world largely because 'he found this world so good a place to live in that he desired no other'.[2] The emphasis in the Gospel and the First Epistle on the wickedness of the world may well represent the reaction of a Sadducean layman who became a devoted Christian, and cherished a new-found belief in the spiritual world of 'truth'.

PAPIAS AND THE ELDER JOHN

Papias (A.D. 70-146) in a famous passage[3] on which much has been written, speaks of two 'Johns', one the Apostle, and one the 'Elder', whom he calls 'a disciple of the Lord'. This Elder John has been frequently identified with the Evangelist, who is also the unnamed Elder of the second and third Epistles. The reader may be referred to the discussions by Drummond (*CAFG*, Chapter V) and Streeter (*FGG*, pp. 447f.). Papias was Bishop of Hieropolis, ten miles from Laodicea. The obvious interpretation of his words is that there were two 'Johns' in Asian tradition, the Apostle and another. Confusion may well have arisen in connexion with the authorship of the Gospel. At the same time, there is no proof that the 'Elder' of the Epistles was called John, and Papias nowhere asserts that the 'Elder' John was ever associated with Asia.

THE TRADITIONAL VIEW

The traditional view that the Gospel was written by the Apostle John is held to-day by only a few scholars. The evidence derived from later writers up to about A.D. 180 is very indecisive. About that date Theophilus of Antioch, and Irenaeus both ascribe the authorship to the Apostle. In the interval there are signs that the apostolic authorship was questioned in the Church. It is by no means certain that

[1] Cf. Loewe, *Judaism and Christianity*, I. 165ff.
[2] E. Bevan, *Jerusalem under the High Priests*, p. 124.
[3] The passage in question is quoted in most writers on the subject, e.g Streeter *FGG*, p. 18.

Ignatius or Polycarp knew the Gospel. Justin Martyr (died about A.D. 165) was acquainted with it, but his infrequent quotation of it has led some to think that he does not regard it as a work that was generally recognized as authoritative. The external evidence is inconclusive. The real basis on which the question must be decided is the internal evidence. This points to a very close connexion of the work with the Apostle, but strongly supports the position that the actual work itself should be ascribed to a non-apostolic author.

One fact, however, must be given the closest consideration. If we assume that chapter xxi is an appendix to chapters i-xx by another hand, the statement in xxi. 24 appears to be the earliest piece of extant evidence for the apostolic authorship of the Gospel (see p. 339). The writer says that the 'disciple whom Jesus loved' is he 'who witnesseth of these things and wrote these things'. It is, however, by no means certain that 'these things' refers to chapters i-xx.[1] It is further added, 'We know that his witness is true'. Who are the 'we'? Why has the statement to be made at all? On the assumption that 'these things' actually refer to the preceding chapters, the statement must imply that even at this very early date some considerable doubt existed regarding the apostolic authorship, which would explain why it is thus authoritatively asserted. There is no manuscript evidence for the omission of *v.* 24, and it should be regarded as originally part of chapter xxi. The 'we' mentioned might be regarded as influential Elders of the Church at Ephesus, who thus supplement the Gospel by the narrative of xxi. 1-23. In *v.* 24 they guarantee the authority of chapters i-xx by asserting their apostolic authorship. It is clear that when *v.* 24 was written the Apostle (*v.* 23) was dead. A fuller treatment of chapter xxi will be found in the Exposition.

The tradition is very strong that the Apostle John lived in Ephesus to old age. As against this, traces have been found of a tradition that he died a martyr much earlier, at the same time as James was martyred in Palestine (Acts xii. 2). The evidence is based on a statement of Papias recorded by a writer of the fifth century. The statement is regarded as cor-

[1] See p. 339.

roborated by the prediction of Jesus in Mark x. 39, which would then have to be regarded as 'a prophecy after' the event'. The subject is dealt with by Bernard (*ICC* xxxvii-xlv), who rejects the theory, and by Burkitt (*GHT*, pp. 252ff.), who accepts it. The theory of the early martyrdom of the Apostle is adversely criticized by Dr. W. F. Howard (*FGRC*, pp. 247-251). The evidence adduced in favour of the tradition is, on the whole, precarious.

III. The Date of the Gospel

There is no apparent use of the Gospel in any writing before the letters of Ignatius. Ignatius wrote his Epistles in the early years of the second century, and died a martyr in A.D. 115. This would mean that the Gospel was not written after A.D. 110, and probably earlier, if Ignatius regarded it as an authoritative work. It is not, however, certain that Ignatius knew the Gospel. Some of the Johannine sayings may have been circulating in Asia Minor before the Gospel was published. (See *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 81-83.) The period within which the Gospel was published may be stated as A.D. 90-110. If the theory that the Gospel is written independently of the Synoptics be adopted,[1] a somewhat earlier date might be possible. Certain internal indications, however, point to the later date. The First Epistle and the Gospel are clearly by the same author. The former is evidently written by a man of advanced years, who has already won a position of influence and authority among those to whom he writes. He can speak of them as 'My little children' (1 John iii. 7, 18). It also implies a certain development in doctrine, and, as also the other two epistles, in church organization as well. The same may be said of the Gospel. In both the Docetic heresy is strongly opposed,[2] which would take some time to develop. The Gospel also appears to be the work of a man who has meditated deeply on the story of Christ's life, and has himself a deep Christian experience which must be the fruit of years. The Logos doctrine, although it has echoes in Paul, would also require some years to develop.

[1] pp. 27f. [2] pp. 43ff.

CHAPTER VII

THE LOGOS CONCEPTION IN THE GOSPEL

THE 'WORD OF GOD'

When the Evangelist uses the term 'Logos' or 'the Word' in the opening sentence of his Gospel, whatever else he has in mind, he is most certainly thinking of the Creation story in Genesis i. 'In the beginning was the Word.' It would have been impossible for anyone, writing to a Christian Church, which had accepted the Old Testament as a Christian Book, to say 'In the beginning was the Word', without intending to carry back the minds of his readers to the opening words of Genesis. The 'Word' of which they would immediately think was 'Let there be light, and there was light'.[1] God speaks and there comes into being the 'firmament'; the waters are 'gathered together'; earth appears, and both 'water' and 'earth' bring forth living creatures. The Evangelist is thinking of the creative Word of God. It may therefore be assumed that the Johannine Logos conception has its roots in Hebrew thought. The writer must also undoubtedly have been aware that the term *Logos* was a commonplace of contemporary pagan religious thought.[2] The elaborate attention that has been given for many years to the history and significance of the term *Logos* in contemporary Hellenistic thought has succeeded in bringing out the fundamental differences between the Hellenistic Logos-conceptions found in Philo and the Hermetic and Mystery religions, and the Johannine 'Word'. The Evangelist is not a philosopher. In Greek thought, *Logos* is essentially a philosophical idea. It means not only spoken word, but the spirit of reason immanent in the world, the ultimate principle of things, a

[1] Burkitt, *Christianity and Gnosis*, p. 94.
[2] p. 99.

spiritual *continuum* in and behind the material world. *Logos* was used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew *dabar* ('word'), which always means the spoken word. It is this Hebrew meaning, and not the idea of the immanent reason, that is the formative element in the Johannine conception.

It is essential to understand that a spoken word to the Hebrew is not a mere sound uttered through the lips in order to express a meaning. A word is a living *thing* and has power to effect things. Goethe knew this when he translates 'In the beginning was the word' by 'In the beginning was the Act'.[1] The idea of the spoken word as a living thing applies both to the word of God and the word of man. Even a human word carries with it inherent power. We see this illustrated in the story of Jacob's stolen blessing in Gen. xxvii. Isaac's blessing actually lights on Jacob, yet he cannot revoke it, much as he longs to do so. It must belong to Jacob for ever. So with a curse. Micah's mother curses the thief who has stolen her silver (Judges xvii), and turns out to be her own son. The son, overhearing the curse, is alarmed, confesses and restores what he has taken. Yet the mother cannot recall the words. The precautions she takes are obscure, but she seems to make a pitiful attempt to divert the force of the curse by dedicating a portion of the silver to the Lord, in order that it may be made into an idol to be set up in her son's house.[2] It is in this sense that a word can be regarded as 'personal'. It is the projection of a spiritual power inherent in the person of him who utters it. Similarly, the Word of God is personal and goes forth charged with all the power of God Himself. 'So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth. It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it' (Is. lv. 11). This Word takes shape in the mouth of the prophet. The prophet's word not only predicts, but it has, if God has really inspired him, the power to bring to pass what it foretells. 'Lo, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have commissioned thee this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, and to

[1] Faust, Part I, Scene 3.
[2] Cf. Moore *JFC* i. p. 414.

destroy and to overthrow' (Jer. i. 9f.). This prophetic word is a constant creative factor in history. As the context of Isaiah lv. 11 shows, this Divine 'Word' not only created the material world, but sustains it hour by hour. The Hebrew had no idea of natural law. God Himself creates ever anew all the phenomena of Nature. The Word of God is the agency that produces frost and snow, floods, the wind, the melting of the ice. 'The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars' (Ps. xxix. 5). It 'splits the rocks with flashes of fire' (*v.* 7). It keeps the stars in their courses (Is. xl. 26). The universe to the Hebrew is not maintained by an all-pervading immanent reason, but by the Word of God. Should that word be withdrawn, all things would relapse into the primeval chaos, and the 'waters' would once again cover the whole earth (Ps. civ. 9; xxxiii. 6f.).

THE WISDOM OF GOD

This conception of the Creative Word brings out sharply one characteristic of Hebrew thought regarding God. He is not to be conceived as involved in too close contact with actual matter. Matter is His creation, as man is also. Yet as human experience deepened, particularly of suffering and man's subjection to the forces of nature; as human society organized itself, and forms of government came into being, God could not be regarded as aloof from these. Hence we find this conception of the Creative Word becoming absorbed in another conception—the Divine 'Wisdom', which made and sustains all creation. Personification in our sense, the Hebrew did not know. In what sense is 'Wisdom' in Prov. viii personified? Only in the same sense as the 'Word' is personified. 'Word' and 'Wisdom' are personal, in so far as they are the activity of a Personal God, and no further. In Prov. viii. Wisdom is, on the one hand, the philosophy of life, which tells men how to live the good life, often merely human prudence and sagacity. Yet this wisdom is of Divine origin. It is put on the lips of the 'wise men', the sages whom God instructs (*vv.* 1-14). Solomon is the traditional sage. Wisdom also directs the affairs of the kingdoms of the earth. 'By me kings reign and princes decree justice.' Wisdom offers re-

wards to those who obey her precepts (*vv.* 15-21). Then comes the famous passage where Wisdom is regarded as co-existent with God at Creation (*vv.* 22-31). Wisdom is 'the splendid impersonation of the divine purpose, formed in the beginning of God's way, at His entry on the great process of creation. As act follows act, she is ever at His side as His ward, sporting in His presence continually with the joy of production.'[1] Wisdom is what might be called the Divine organizing energy of the whole universe.

Into the later Jewish conception of Wisdom, Greek philosophical conceptions had already begun to penetrate. In the Apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon*, which shows traces of the influence of Greek thought, Wisdom is said to operate as 'a breath of the power of God', 'an image of His goodness', 'renews all things'; 'from generation to generation, passing into consecrated souls, she maketh men friends of God and prophets' (vii. 25ff.). Here, Wisdom begins to take on the character of an intermediary being, mediating between God and creation. This development is part of a movement towards the conception of intermediary beings, which is characteristic of the period between the Exile and the first century A.D., when, under the influence of Babylonian and Persian ideas, the doctrine of angels and spirits was developed. Underlying this development is the conception of God as so transcendent that He cannot come into direct contact with the world of created things.[2] The transcendence, however, is moral, not metaphysical. The presence of these intermediary beings is intended to emphasize that God is always a living God, who does things in the world and for His people. While not Himself visible, He uses 'wisdom', or angels, or His 'Spirit', in order to reveal His will and purpose, and to effect His ends.

The idea of intermediaries evidently had considerable currency in Jewish circles where the Christian message came.[3]

[1] J. E. Carpenter, *The Johannine Writings*, p. 293.

[2] The origin of this personification is well described by J. E. Carpenter (*op. cit.*, pp. 293f.).

[3] Quite frequently the Jewish *Memra* of the Targums is cited as a precursor of the Logos in the Fourth Gospel. This is erroneous. *Memra* is not a being of any kind, not a personified intermediary. It is simply a

The Christian preaching sweeps these aside, in order to affirm the supremacy of the exalted Christ (Col. ii. 15, 18) as sole Mediator and Divine Agent in the creation and government of the world. In Hebrews i-ii. 9 there is an elaborate argument to prove that angels are inferior to Christ, the eternal Son. In Colossians, Paul is battling with a type of Hellenistic-Jewish thought, which had made its way into the Christian Church, and taught that angelic beings had still to be reckoned with. In Col. i. 16, 19 ('It was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fulness dwell'[1]) there is close affinity with the language of the Prologue. The Fourth Evangelist also sweeps aside intermediary beings when he says, 'Without him was not anything made that came into being'.

THE WRITTEN LAW AS THE WORD

There emerged a further stage in the development of the Jewish conception of the 'Word'. The 'Wisdom' of God ultimately became identified with the Jewish Law or *Torah*. The identification is already apparent in Deut. iv. 1-20. In Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 3ff. (200-180 B.C.) the Creator is said to give Wisdom the commandment 'Let thy tabernacle be in Jacob' (*v.* 8). Israel is chosen out of all the nations as the dwelling-place of Wisdom. In *v.* 23 Wisdom, as it were, takes flesh, in the Torah. 'All these things are the Book of the Covenant of the Most High God, even the Law which Moses commanded us.' The 'Word' became the written Word. It is important to note that by the first century A.D. the Jewish Law or Torah comprised not merely the legal enactments of the Pentateuch, but the prophetic writings, and the histories, written from the prophetic or ecclesiastical point of view

reverent circumlocution for the name of God. It is a literary device, in order that in any passage that is being interpreted, God may not appear to the uninstructed worshipper to behave like a man, or be Himself visible. Gen. iii. 8, for example, is translated 'They heard the voice of the Memra of God the Lord walking in the garden'. (Cf. G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, I, pp. 417ff. Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, II, pp. 302-333, brings to bear an abundance of quotations from Jewish writings which support this view of Memra as merely a 'smoke-screen' word.)

[1] 'Fulness' (*plērōma*) = the totality of God's redemptive action.

(Judges, Samuel, Chronicles). Indeed the Jewish Bible of that date included practically the whole of the Old Testament as we have it now, with the possible exception of the Book of Esther and the Song of Solomon. Judaism had become the religion of a Book, which, interpreted by the Scribes, became the written Law of all life and faith.

The Law in this sense acquired in rabbinical thought the personification given to Wisdom in Prov. viii. 22ff. Rabbinical interpretations of this passage apply it to the Law. The Law is older than the world. 'This (wisdom) is the education given by the law, through which we learn divine things in a manner befitting them, and human things in a way profitable to us' (4 Maccabees i. 17). There is every reason to think that in the Prologue the Evangelist has in view not only the earlier conception of Wisdom, but the Law as conceived in contemporary Judaism. In verse 17 the Law is contrasted with the 'Word made flesh'.

In corroboration of this suggestion, we may briefly recall the place which is given to the Law in later Jewish Rabbinical thought. In one midrash, dated about A.D. 120, the Law is spoken of as 'the instrument with which the world was created'.[1] At Creation, God first looked into the Law, which was conceived as containing the ideal types and relations of all things that were yet to be. 'God looked into the Torah and created the world.' 'In the beginning' (Gen. i. 1) is translated 'by the beginning'. 'By the beginning' God created all things. Torah is the 'beginning'. In a later midrash of the third century A.D. the Law is said to be like 'the parchments and tablets' of the architect; as we would say, his plan. Philo, who died in A.D. 54, in speaking of the Mosaic laws, says, 'Their aim is the harmony of the universe . . . they are in accordance with the law (*logos*) of eternal nature.'[2] In *The Sayings of the Jewish Fathers* a very significant parallel to the words of 1 John iii. 1, 2 is cited. 'Beloved are Israel that they are called children of God; greater love was it that it was made known to them that they are called

[1] C. Taylor, *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*, p. 173. This work is a valuable translation with commentary of Mishnah, *Aboth*.

[2] *De Vita Mosis* II. 10.

children of God, as it is said, Ye are the children of the Lord your God (Deut. xiv. 1). Beloved are Israel that there was given to them the instrument with which the world was created; greater love was it that it was made known to them that there was given to them the instrument with which the world was created, as it is said, For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law' (Prov. iv. 2).[1] We cannot escape the impression that the Evangelist, in the Prologue, is moving in the region of Jewish thought all the time. In the opening verses (1-3) he is using language about the pre-existent Logos, which is closely paralleled by that used in rabbinical writing about the Law. The Torah also is said to have been 'with God', like Wisdom in Prov. viii, and to have existed in the beginning. The Torah is even said to be of Divine nature. It is called 'the daughter of God'.[2] An additional confirmation of the position that Jewish thought is the formative element in the Johannine Logos conception is the appearance in verses 4f. of the ideas of 'life' and 'light' which were ascribed to the Torah frequently in rabbinical thought (cf. Ps. cxix. 105; Prov. iii. 22, iv. 13, vi. 23). The claims made for the written Torah, John now assigns to Christ, the eternal Word, and the personal fulfilment of God's eternal mind and purpose. 'The Law was given by Moses: grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ.' We shall have occasion often to note, in the synagogue controversies of this gospel, the way in which the claims of the Torah are set over against the claims of Christ. No doubt the Evangelist's mind has an outlook on contemporary ideas of the Logos, but it is rooted in the Jewish conception of the Word of God.[3]

[1] Taylor, pp. 57f.; Mishnah, *Aboth*, iii. 15 (Danby).
[2] SB II. 355.
[3] The Stoic conception of the *Logos* is described in pp. 54f.

GENERAL ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL

I. THE PROLOGUE. i. 1-18.

II. THE ORIGINS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. i.19—iv. 54.

1. The Witness of the Baptist. i. 6-8, 15, 19-34; iii. 22-30; iv. 1-3; v. 33; x. 40-42.

2. The Call of the First Disciples. i. 35-51.

3. Two Symbolic Signs. ii. 1-22.
(1) *The Marriage at Cana.* ii. 1-11.
Symbolizes the ministry about to begin: the water of Judaism transformed into the wine of the Christian Gospel.
(2) *The Cleansing of the Temple.* ii. 13-22.
Chronologically belongs to end of ministry. Introduced here to symbolize the aim and result of the ministry. The ancient Jewish Temple gives way to the Church, the 'body of Christ'.

4. The Universal Appeal of the Gospel. ii. 23-iv. 54. Types of Christian converts—Nicodemus the Jew, the Samaritan Woman, the Gentile Nobleman. The variety of Christ's appeal is thus illustrated.
(1) Nicodemus the Pharisee. iii. 1-21; 'Birth from Above.'
(2) The Woman of Samaria. iv. 1-42; 'The Water of Life.'
(3) The Gentile Nobleman. iv. 43-54; 'The Commanding Word.'

III. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD. v-xii.

Illustrated by events selected from the public ministry of Jesus, followed by discourses.

1. The Divinity of Jesus. v, vii. 15-24. (*Story.* Bethesda.)

2. Jesus the Bread of Life. vi. 1-71. (*Stories.* Feeding of Five Thousand, and Walking on Water.)

3. The Messiahship of Jesus. vii. 1-14 (Historical Introduction). 25-39 (Discourse). 40-52 (Attempted Arrest). vii. 53—viii. 11 is an interpolation from another gospel.
4. A Series of Controversies. viii. 12-59.
5. The Healing of the Man born Blind. ix. 1-41. A story illustrative of Jesus as the Light.
6. The Parable of the Good Shepherd. x. 1-18.
7. A Discourse and Controversy at the Feast of Dedication. x. 19-42.
8. The Raising of Lazarus. Jesus the Life-giver and Conqueror of Death. xi. 1-44.
9. The Approach of the 'Hour' and the Culmination of the Conflict. xi. 45—xii. 50.
   (1) The Death of Jesus as determined by the Ecclesiastical Authorities. xi. 45-53.
   (2) Jesus' Freedom of Action. He retires to Ephraim and returns of His own free-will for the Passover. xi. 54-57.
   (3) The Anointing at Bethany. xii. 1-8.
   (4) The Triumphal Entry. xii. 9-19.
   (5) The Coming of the Greeks. xii. 20-36.
   (6) Summaries of the Mission and Message of Jesus. xii. 37-50.

IV. THE PASSION NARRATIVE. xiii-xix.

1. Jesus alone with His Disciples. xiii-xvii.
   (1) The Washing of the Disciples' Feet. xiii. 1-17.
   (2) The Unmasking of the Traitor. xiii. 18-30.
   (3) The Farewell Discourses. xiii. 31—xvi.
   (4) The Prayer of Jesus. xvii.
2. The Arrest and Trial. xviii. 1—xix. 16.
3. The Crucifixion and Burial. xix. 17-42.

V. THE RESURRECTION NARRATIVE. xx. 1-29.
(*vv.* 30, 31 contain a statement of the purpose of the Gospel.)

VI. AN APPENDIX. xxi. 1-25, describing an Appearance of Jesus in Galilee and the Restoration of Peter.

EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL

I. THE PROLOGUE. i. 1-18.

THE prologue to the Gospel is its preface, in which practically all the central ideas of the Gospel appear.

1-3 For the Logos conception see Chapter VII of the Introduction. The closing words of *v.* 1 should be translated, 'the Logos was divine'. Here the word *theos* has no article, thus giving it the significance of an adjective. *All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.* These words are not primarily intended to state a metaphysical theory of the origin of things, but to reassure the readers that, in face of all the evil and pain of which the world is full, no inferior or malign spiritual being is responsible for its creation and government. He is also saying to the pagan world that Jesus Christ, the creative Word made flesh, is also the *Logos*; not merely the ultimate reason and meaning of things, but in control, under God, of the universe. Evidently the Evangelist expects his readers to understand who is meant by the Logos, which suggests that in the circle for which he wrote 'Logos' was an accepted title of Jesus.

4, 5 At what point in the Prologue does the Evangelist begin to think of the earthly life of Jesus? His mind is not moving only in the super-terrestrial world in verses 4 and 5. With *v.* 4 his thought begins to circle around the human life of Jesus, leading up to the summary statement in *v.* 14. As incarnate, Jesus is *the life* and *the light* of men. It is of this divine-human personality that he says, *the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness overcame it not* (R.V.m.).

6-8 See on the Baptist, pp. 109ff.

9 *The light which lighteth every man,* does not mean that in every man, irrespective of race or religion, there is some knowledge of God, however faint. However true, that is not in the writer's mind. The words are to be interpreted in the

sense of iii. 21. In Eph. iii. 9 the word translated "make all men see' (*phōtizō*) is the same word as John uses here for *lighteth*, and should be translated 'enlighten'. In the religious language of the time, the word means to divulge a secret doctrine or 'mystery'. Paul uses it as a synonym for 'preaching' (cf. Eph. v. 7-14). John in his use of the word here is thinking of the effect of the message and mission of the Incarnate Logos. Christ's presence in the world as the Light reveals men as doing good or doing evil. Christ is the *true* light (see note on 'Truth', pp. 141ff.). The idea of Judgment is prominent. Compare the use of the word *phōtizō* ('bring to light' A.V.) in 1 Cor. iv. 5.

10, 11 The Johannine conception of *the world* includes all created things, what we would call 'Nature'. *The world was made by him* (*vv.* 3, 10). *The world* includes mankind, and it is in this narrower sense that the word is mostly used. In all its uses in this sense, it is implied that the world of men is hostile to Christ. It is under the sway of the devil (xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11). It represents 'the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life' (1 John ii. 16). The 'wrath' of God lies upon it (iii. 36). Yet this world of men is also the object of God's love (iii. 16). Jesus died for it (vi. 51; xi. 51f.) Jesus has 'overcome the world' (xvi. 33), and the Church shares His victory (1 John v. 4). It may be a disappointment to some to realize that John shows no interest in Nature as such. Neither for that matter does Paul. There is not a blade of green grass in the writing of either of them (except vi. 10). Jesus is alone in the New Testament in His eye for the doings of birds and beasts, and for the beauty of grass and flowers. John has an eye only for the world of persons, and his view is sombre. He is engaged in presenting the historical story of the way in which men, seeking for God, treated Him when He revealed Himself in Jesus of Nazareth. He is himself such a great believer, that he is absorbed in the tragedy of men's unbelief in Him. The 'natural man' has always been the Christian problem. It should, however, be noted that John's outlook on the world of material things or the world of men is very different from the religious asceticism and world-renouncing spirit of Hellen-

istic religion (p. 43). The material body of man, as well as the material world, are not gross and evil in themselves. The 'Word' could become flesh and dwell among men (*v.* 14).

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. This tragic note is heard all through the Gospel, as Jesus faces enemies who are His own people, and God's chosen race. It must have been a great problem for Christian faith and a source of great difficulty to the preacher of the Christian Gospel in the pagan world, that the nation which gloried in calling itself God's chosen people should reject the Messiah, the 'Son of God', and crucify Him. Paul wrestles with this problem in Rom. ix–xi. Paul has a passionate longing and belief that 'Israel will yet be saved' (Rom. xi. 1). It sometimes appears as though John does not share this belief and longing. Yet for him, the Saviour of the world is a Jew. *Salvation is of the Jews* (iv. 22; cf. iv. 9). His confessed purpose in writing the Gospel is to promote the belief that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah (xx. 31). It is as 'King of the Jews', in spite of their protests, that Jesus is crucified (xix. 21). The indictment against the Jews is based upon the irreconcilable breach between Jesus and the Jewish authorities of His day. The Evangelist also writes from a standpoint in time when the Church and Judaism are finally separate from one another. The prophetic summary in xii. 37-43 has an immediate reference to the ministry just concluded and its tragic result. Yet even there it is indicated that the rejection was not made by everyone. *Even of the rulers, many believed on him.*

12 Note that this Evangelist always uses *teknon* (child) when he speaks of men as becoming 'sons' of God. Jesus alone is spoken of as *huios*, the 'Son of God' (cf. 1 John iii. 1). He thus emphasizes that the relation of sonship is conferred upon men only through the work of 'the only-begotten Son' (cf. *v.* 18. He alone gives men the *right* (or *power* A.V.) *to become children of God* (R.V.m.).

13 These 'children of God' are not born *of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man.* This means not born of a woman, nor of sexual desire, nor of a human father. He has in mind the birth from above of which he speaks in chapter iii. In characteristic Johannine fashion he emphasizes

the distinction by saying practically the same thing three times. He has in mind the Jewish conviction, which both the Baptist and Jesus antagonize, that to belong to the chosen race by birth is to be worthy to enter the Kingdom (Matt. iii. 9; John viii. 33ff.).[1]

14 *The Word became flesh.* These classical words are a centre around which has grown up a mass of theological speculation on the person of Christ. We must here consider them, not according to the place they have taken in the Church's thinking, but in their particular significance here. John has no theory of the Incarnation. He simply states that the pre-existent Logos became a human personality, whose life on earth he is about to describe. The action of the Logos is an act of Divine love. At the same time John has certain doctrinal considerations in his mind. He desires to emphasize, as against the Docetists, the real humanity of Jesus, not a phantom humanity (p. 43).

The Evangelist writes these words *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us*, not as though he were transcribing a mere dogma of the Church, but in a tone which indicates that he is describing the one great epoch-making event in the history of the world. All the central Christian doctrines were first of all doxologies, and the note of doxology sounds not only in this verse, but in the unmistakable poetic rhythm of the Prologue throughout. The Evangelist is conscious of the revolutionary nature of the Divine action, that God should make His final appeal to men through the senses. Not only the Cross but the Incarnation was ' to the Jew a stumbling-block and to the Greek foolishness '.

Dwelt among us. John has in mind here the later rabbinical conception of the Shekinah. In the *targums* the word

[1] It was held that God, in judging the present age, would have regard to the character of the Patriarchs and show special leniency towards their posterity. This appeal to God for special favour ' for the sake of the fathers ', was an element in contemporary Jewish religion, which easily led to a barren confidence in racial descent (Moore, *JFC* I. 541; cf. Rom. xi. 29). Another reading ' who was born ', referring back to the ' his ' in ' in his name ', is suggested. In that case the reference would be to the Virgin Birth. The only manuscript authority is an old Latin version which has *qui natus est*. This version is based on some lost Greek manuscript. Justin and Irenaeus both presuppose this reading. The reading in the text is to be preferred. A dogmatic interest probably dictated the alternative reading.

is a 'smoke-screen' word (cf. *Memra*, p. 93 n.3), used in order to avoid the impression that God comes into direct contact with terrestrial life. For example, the *targum* on Exodus xxv. 8 reads, 'And they shall make a sanctuary before me, and I will cause my Shekinah to rest among them'. *Shekinah* really means the dwelling or 'abiding' of God. The word might be translated 'The Presence'. It is specially connected with the Tabernacle, and the Temple. The *targum* on Hab. ii. 20 is 'Jehovah was pleased to cause His Shekinah to dwell in his holy temple'. By the use of the word, the idea is preserved that God Himself is not limited at any time to one place. If His 'presence' is here, yet God Himself is also everywhere.[1] There is also a reference to the conception that 'Wisdom' by the Divine decree was commanded to dwell or 'tabernacle' with Israel, in preference to all the other nations of the earth (Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 3f.). Wisdom, so to speak, is already 'enfleshed' in the Torah. Now the Logos has come to dwell *among us*: i.e. in the Christian Church. The exclusive claim of Judaism is set aside. *We beheld his glory.* To the Christian Church alone is the 'glory' of God fully revealed.

GLORY

'Glory' is a characteristic Johannine expression. The disciples are said to have seen the 'glory' of Jesus. 'We beheld his glory, glory derived from the Father, as of an only-begotten son, and full of grace and truth' (i. 14). In the miracle at Cana, Jesus is said to 'manifest his glory' (ii. 11). This 'glory' is displayed in all the miracles recorded, but it is also regarded as characteristic of the activities of the whole ministry. Jesus is also said to 'glorify God'. 'I have glorified thee on the earth having finished the work which thou gavest me to do' (xvii. 4). It will only be possible to grasp the full content of the word if we cast our thoughts back to the Biblical conception of 'glory', as applied to God in the Old Testament.

'Glory' and 'glorification' in ordinary speech, are apt to give us wrong impressions of the Biblical meaning. The Greek words are *doxa* and *doxazō* ('glorify'). These are used in the Greek Old Testament to translate the Hebrew *kābôd*, and its cognate verb. In ordinary Greek, *doxa* means the opinion which

[1] Cf. Taylor, *Sayings of the Fathers*, p. 43, n. 8; Moore *JFC* I. 434ff.

men form of things or persons, and it can be used also for the reputation which these acquire in consequence. That usage appears once or twice in this Gospel (v. 44; xii. 43), where it means praise or renown which men seek at one another's hands. The Greek word, however, in the New Testament acquires a special meaning derived from the Hebrew *kābôd,* which originally means 'weight' or 'heaviness'. It may mean 'riches', 'worldly gear' (Gen. xxxi. 1). In Is. xvii. 3, 4, 'glory' is used of the material prosperity of the nation. The most prevalent use, however, is seen in the phrase 'the glory of God'. The connexion between this use of the word, and the two just mentioned, is found in the root idea of *kābôd,* which is 'weight'. 'Weight' may be used in English in a physical and in a spiritual sense, as in the expression, 'a weighty man'. God's 'weight' or 'worth' is displayed in the exercise of His sovereign power. This is manifest in the creation and government of the world (Ps. xix. 1). 'The whole earth is full of his glory' (Is. vi. 3). God's righteous sovereign power and will are seen everywhere. All history, and all human life are under God's sway, and are the instruments of His purposes.

There is another illuminating usage of *kābôd* in Hebrew thought. It may mean the 'self' or 'soul' of a man; probably because a man's inner character or 'soul' is the most 'glorious' part of him. Hence a religious poet can address his soul as 'my glory'! (Ps. xvi. 9.) Compare Gen. xlix. 6 where the same word is translated 'my soul'. 'Glory' is the whole personal activity of the 'living God', not merely one of His attributes. Thus God's 'glory' comes to mean His 'very self and essence all divine'. The 'self' even of a human individual, his inmost thoughts, feelings, purposes, remains hidden from his fellows, unless he chooses to make it known. So God's 'glory' or self is conceived as not the result of a search and discovery by man, but of a self-revelation of God. *His 'glory' is his self-revealed character and being.* He reveals it in nature and in history. When men are said to 'give glory to God', much more is meant than that they are extolling a power and a goodness which they have discovered for themselves. They are acknowledging their faith in God's essential being and revealed character. To 'give glory to God' is to say, not 'glory be to God', but 'glory belongs to God' (Gal. i. 5; 1 Pet. iv. 11). That glory has been revealed particularly in God's great redemptive acts whereby He delivered His people from captivity (Is. xl. 5). God manifests His glory, makes it visible and actual in deeds of power, mercy, and judgment for man's deliverance and advantage. When Moses asks to see God's glory in Exod. xxxiii. 17-23, the answer is, 'I will make all my *goodness* to pass before thee'. God's 'name' is then made known to Moses, 'the Lord merciful and gracious'.

'He is glorified not when His goodness is revealed to men, and they admire or praise it; for that would still involve a certain egoism. He is glorified when by revealing His goodness He attracts men unto Himself, and His own goodness is reproduced in them, and they are created anew in His image; for to be this is blessedness.'[1]

There is yet another aspect of the Old Testament conception of the glory of God. God's glory is conceived as manifested in a physical way, e.g. as a bright or fiery appearance resembling the rainbow (Ezek. i. 28; x. 4); making the ground where it appears to shine (xliii. 2); as moving from one place to another (ix. 3; x. 18). Even this, however, must not be taken in any purely materialistic way. In Ezekiel, the glory is not visible to the natural eye, but only in vision. Not until we come to the later parts of the Old Testament, the sections written under priestly influence, known as P, do we hear of glory as an actual physical phenomenon, visible to the natural eye. The Fourth Evangelist speaks of the glory of God as revealed in the human personality of Jesus, manifest 'in the flesh', but visible only to the believer. A notable example of the glory of God as a physical phenomenon is found in the story of the giving of the Law on Sinai, where it appears as 'devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of all the children of Israel' (Exod. xxiv. 16-18). Conceptions like these are the development of the ritualistic imagination, although it has always to be borne in mind that the physical phenomenon is meant not merely to terrify, but may be either a sign of Divine favour (Lev. ix. 6), or a manifestation of Divine 'wrath' (Exod. xvi. 7). In both cases, the manifestation is a personal approach of the righteous God, as men conceived Him, to His people. The Old Testament conception of the glory of God, however it is described, implies an active and righteous personal Deity, a living God, Who does not dwell in supreme indifference to human affairs like the Epicurean gods. Neither does He interfere in the affairs of men in a merely arbitrary way. His glory is His Divine purpose for the nation and for the world.

A feeling of awe always attached to the vision of God's glory. It appears in the vision of Isaiah (vi. 1-8). The full vision of God's glory is impossible to men while they are still on earth (Exod. xxxiii. 20). Hence the full experience came to be connected with the coming of a Messianic age (Is. xi. 9), what in the New Testament is called the 'Kingdom of God' (p. 130f.).[2]

[1] A. B. Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 174. See also the two articles on *Glory* in Hastings *DB*.

[2] Those who wish to pursue the conception of God in the Old Testament will find *The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament* by H. Wheeler Robinson, Chapter III, very illuminating. See also *The Glory of God*, by Israel Abrahams.

This eschatological Messianic conception of 'glory' appears in the Fourth Evangelist's use of the term. Jesus is the Messiah, and in Him appears the full glory of God. This glory is manifested during the ministry on earth. When the Evangelist says *We beheld his glory*, he is really saying that the final purpose of God is already achieved in the historical person Jesus. The illness and death of Lazarus is 'for the glory of God, that the Son of Man may be glorified thereby' (xi. 4). The raising of Lazarus is a manifestation of the eternal sway of the love and power of God.

The 'glorifying' of Jesus always means His dying (xiii. 31). It is God Who thus glorifies Him, and in His dying God Himself is glorified. The Cross is the complete manifestation of God's glory, revealing His goodness or love to the utmost, yet not complete unless that love is accepted and reproduced in men's lives. Compare xii. 32: 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself' (cf. also iii. 16; xiii. 1). Jesus does not possess on earth the full glory which belongs to Him from the beginning (xvii. 5). On earth He is the Father's delegate, and dependent on Him for all manifestations of glory (p. 170). In the 'signs' that He did, and the words that He spoke, Jesus 'witnessed' to that active upper world of Divine glory from which He came (xvii. 22).

In later Jewish thought the idea of God's glory was largely submerged in the doctrine of the *Shekinah*, 'the Presence' (p. 102). The Evangelist makes use of the idea. Jesus is the 'presence' or 'dwelling' of God on earth (i. 14. See Exposition). We shall miss the meaning of 'glory' in this Gospel, unless we realize that to the Evangelist, even with all his heightening of effects in the story of Jesus' life, 'glory' is not just the display of Divine majesty and power to be wondered at and admired. It stands for the final act of the living God in history, through the person and mission of Jesus, directed towards the bringing of all men into the family of God. Christ is said to give His disciples His own glory (xvii. 22). That means not merely life after death, but life here and now. They are enabled to reproduce in their own lives and mission, the active love and power of the Father. 'Glory' in this Gospel is God in action through Jesus Christ, bringing the whole 'weight' or riches (*kābôd*) of the love of the Father to bear on the world of men.

14 *The only-begotten from the Father* (cf. iii. 16, 18). The phrase simply emphasizes the unique Sonship of Jesus. *From* instead of 'of' is designedly chosen in order to exclude the idea of a merely physical relationship, of creation or pro-

creation, between God and Christ. The former would be a Jewish idea, the latter a Greek one. The Logos is an uncreated Being. In the word 'only-begotten', the emphasis is not on the *origin* of Jesus, but on the fact that he is an 'only son'. It is so used in Luke vii. 12; viii. 42; ix. 38. Cf. Heb. xi. 17. It was only when controversy arose regarding the Person of Christ that *unigenitus* became the Latin translation of 'only-begotten'. Earlier Latin texts render by *unicus*='unique'. *Full of grace and truth* is reminiscent of the conjunction of 'loving-kindness and truth', 'mercy and truth' in the Old Testament as applied to God (2 Sam. xv. 20; Ps. xxv. 10). 'Loving-kindness' and 'mercy' both translate the same word, *hesedh*. Grace (*charis*) occurs only here and in *v.* 16 in the Johannine writings. It is a Pauline word, belonging to the primitive Christian phraseology, and means love shown to the unlovely and undeserving. It is a pity that it is now impossible to translate grace by 'condescension', 'familiar, condescending, free' as in the hymn. Unfortunately the English word has deteriorated in meaning and now suggests patronage, as of One who has descended to those on a lower level only in act or word, but not in spirit. In Elizabethan English the word was a noble one. 'It meant generally to waive one's rights and claims, or to forgo some privilege, for the sake of others, that and coming to an agreement.'[1] *Full of grace and truth* is to be taken as defining *glory*, which is the nature of God (p. 104). Compare *Grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ* (*v.* 17). In other words, in Christ we have both the gift and the Giver. This is emphasized by the word *truth* (p. 141f.). *Truth* means that God Himself is really present in all that Christ said and did; a conception which we meet frequently in this Gospel.

16 *Of his fulness have we all received, and grace upon grace.* *Fulness* (*pleroma*) means here the filling up or completion of God's redemptive purpose. The term occurs several times in Paul's letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians (Eph. i. 23; iii. 19; iv. 13; Col. i. 19; ii. 9). It means 'the whole energy, purpose, and nature of God'. The use of the word is best understood both in Paul and in John, if we realize that they

[1] Moffatt, *Grace in the New Testament*, p 195.

both intend by their use of it to deny a false doctrine. Christ is not one of a number of intermediary beings between God and the world. He is the sole mediator in the creation and government of the world. Men have not to reckon with 'thrones, dominions, principalities and powers', names which denote intermediary angelic beings, good or bad, to whom is entrusted the government of the world by God. In thus using the term 'fulness' (*pleroma*), the Evangelist is actually restating his doctrine of the Logos, and in particular of the 'Logos made flesh'. In Paul, *pleroma* means that the whole government of the world is entrusted to the exalted Christ, who is on the throne of the universe. Here *his fulness* denotes the fulness of *grace and truth*, the whole divine energy of God's love, manifest in the Word made flesh.

It is important to remember that here John is not merely stating his theological doctrine of the Person of Christ. He is also recording an actual impression which Jesus produced upon all whom He helped on earth, and who applied to Him for help. They were made to feel that He who healed them and changed their lives, after He had given them what they needed or asked, had still in store an infinite reserve of love and power. 'They knew little about Him, and had no thought of His divinity in a theological sense; but instinctively they guessed at a kind of affluence which made them surprised at nothing He did.'[1] Compare the Syro-Phoenician woman whose request meant everything to her, but who yet felt that she was only asking like a dog, for 'crumbs that fell from its master's table'. It is precisely this divine affluence of love and power that John indicates in *grace upon grace*.

18 *The only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. Declared* represents a Greek word that was used in Greek mystery-cults, of the 'mystagogue' whose business it was to interpret the ritual to the initiates (p. 75). *In the bosom of the Father* means to be fully aware of all God's purposes and thoughts, as no mystagogue could be. It is really equivalent to the *with God* of verse 1. In Luke xvi. 23 the phrase is applied to Lazarus in the other world, 'in the bosom of Abraham'. It implies that Lazarus has a place

[1] W. M. Macgregor, *Jesus Christ the Son of God*, p. 125.

of honour. In xiii. 23 it is used in a literal sense of one who 'sits next to' Jesus, in the place of honour. Here it means that Jesus has a peculiarly intimate relationship with God. This applies not only to the pre-existent life or to the life after the Ascension, but also to the life on earth (cf. i. 51). Jesus is represented throughout the Gospel as doing 'what He seeth the Father doing'. His intimate knowledge of God is not dimmed by life on earth.

II. THE ORIGINS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

1. The Witness of the Baptist. i. 6-8, 15, 19-34. (Cf. 35f.; iii. 22-30; iv. 1-3; v. 33; x. 40f.)

In the Synoptic scheme of the ministry of Jesus, the Baptist is represented as the divinely-appointed herald who appears in order to proclaim the coming of the Messiah. In the Marcan account the Baptist's mission is the fulfilment of prophecy; i.e. fulfilment of the revealed purpose of God. It is also 'the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ'; i.e. it had an integral place in the earliest Christian preaching (Mark i. 1-3; cf. p. 111). The great movement which he inaugurated among the people was chosen by Jesus Himself as the occasion for the commencement of His ministry. Jesus submitted to baptism at his hands, and at that moment had the vision which marked His full consciousness of the nature of His Messianic vocation. In submitting to baptism, He identifies Himself with the sinful nation, awakened to its sin by the Baptist's message. The conception of the Baptist's mission in the Fourth Gospel is similar, but is described only in the briefest outline. He is a 'man sent from God . . . to bear witness of the Light'. The baptism of Jesus, however, instead of being an inauguration of His Messianic consciousness, becomes merely a sign given to the Baptist in order that he might recognize Jesus as 'the Son of God' (i. 33).

It is surprising to find that in this gospel the Baptist is represented as under the necessity of denying that he himself

is the Messiah (i. 20). In the Prologue, the Evangelist suddenly introduces the figure of the Baptist, and says that 'he was not the Light'. These denials clearly point to the fact that the Evangelist finds it necessary to preserve the church to which he is writing from an erroneous conception of the Baptist and his mission. The Baptist movement evidently did not disappear and become merged in the movement inaugurated by Jesus, as the Synoptic Gospels seem to imply (Mark i. 14). This Evangelist is concerned to impress upon his readers that Jesus did not simply take up the Baptist's work, after he laid it down when he was put in prison (iii. 24).

It will be convenient to take together at this point the various references in the Gospel to the Baptist and his work. These are detailed above.

i. 6-8, 15.

The importance for the Ephesian Church of its attitude towards the Baptist accounts for the mention of him twice in the Prologue (*vv.* 6, 15). The Evangelist's picture of the Baptist requires to be supplemented by the picture of him which we have in the other three gospels. He concentrates on those aspects of his teaching and work which emphasize his subordinate relationship to Jesus. The apocalyptic expectation and the moral strenuousness of his teaching, with which we are familiar in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. iii. 7-10; Luke iii. 7-14), disappear. Yet his account of the Baptist's teaching and attitude towards Jesus has a close affinity with the skeleton outline of Mark i. 7f. John has concentrated on the idea of the Baptist's conscious witness to the person and work of Jesus. In i. 23 the prophecy of Is. xl. 3 is definitely claimed by the Baptist as spoken of himself, and is no longer an estimate of his mission applied to him by the Christian tradition. In the Synoptic accounts it is applied to him by the Evangelists. Mark i. 14 would imply that it was only after John's imprisonment that Jesus began His preaching, and in the same terms as the Baptist. The Fourth Evangelist goes out of his way to contradict this tradition (iii. 24). Jesus must not be regarded as simply carrying on the work neces-

sarily relinquished by the Baptist. The Baptist is not one of the founders of the Christian Church. Jesus alone is its Founder. The opening of Mark's Gospel asserts that the 'beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ (in accordance with the words of the prophet Isaiah, Behold I send my messenger . . . paths straight)' was, that 'John came who baptized in the desert and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins'. Whether the Fourth Evangelist is acquainted with the Gospel of Mark or not, Mark's words regarding the Baptist clearly represent a strongly established Christian tradition which gives him a commanding and pre-eminent place in the Christian Gospel. His baptism is said to be a baptism 'of repentance for the remission of sins', a phrase which is applied to Christian baptism (Acts ii. 38). There was evidently a strong tendency 'to draw the Baptist, as it were, more fully within the circle of the Christian movement, and to represent him more and more exclusively as having been consciously a forerunner and herald of Jesus Christ'.[1] In our interpretation of the Synoptic tradition, emphasis should be laid, not primarily on what the Baptist thought about Jesus, but on what Jesus thought about the Baptist. Jesus speaks of him in the glowing terms of Matt. xi. 7-15, and expressly says that his message was given him by God (Mark xi. 30 and parallels). It is very probable that Jesus Himself first gave him the title of 'forerunner', as also that He was the first to call him 'Elijah' (Matt. xi. 14). He sets John's ministry and speaks of John's rejection as worthy to be mentioned alongside His own—a mirror of judgment upon his contemporaries (Matt. xi. 18f.).

This 'canonization' of the Baptist had evidently proceeded so far in the Ephesian Church as to give rise to a party with a considerable amount of influence, which was disposed to regard the Baptist as a more noteworthy person than Jesus Himself. Luke (i. 5-25, 39-58) preserves a tradition of the Baptist's birth, where the details run parallel to those connected with the birth of Jesus. It is apparent that the Fourth Evangelist is seeking to antagonize such a party.[2] This hypothesis is confirmed by the

[1] A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 8.
[2] Cf. Howard *FGRC*, pp. 24f.; Scott *FG*, pp. 77-86.

appearance in Acts (xviii. 25; xix. 3f.) of a sect, who are called 'disciples', in other words are regarded as belonging to the Christian Church. Apollos is their leader in Ephesus, and perhaps founded the party there. It is said that 'he taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John'. Apollos is convinced by Aquila and Priscilla that Jesus is the Christ. We are also told that Paul, on his visit to Ephesus after Apollos had left, found some who still adhered to the views of Apollos. Under his influence they submitted to Christian baptism. There are further indications in later writings outside the New Testament, that the conversion of Apollos and some of his followers to the orthodox faith did not end the movement. Indeed it has been suggested that those who still adhered to 'Baptist' views, became more strongly opposed than ever to the Christian position, and may have allied themselves with other Jewish opponents. In the *Clementine Recognitions* (first half of the third century) there is evidence of a Baptist party with which the Church is engaged in active controversy. In that document it is stated that 'Some even of the disciples of John, who seemed to be great ones, have separated themselves and proclaimed their own master as the Christ' (i. 54). If such a party was active in Ephesus, we can understand why this Evangelist emphatically points out that the Baptist directed his followers away from himself to Jesus (i. 26, 29); why he nowhere calls John, 'the Baptist'; why he relates that John is said to be only a 'lamp', burning and shining indeed, but 'for a season' (v. 35; cf. 2 Pet. i. 19); is said to 'decrease' while Jesus 'increases' (iii. 30); to be the 'friend' or groomsman, and not the 'bridegroom' (iii. 28-30); that the witness of God to Jesus is greater than His witness to John (v. 36); that the works of Jesus are Divine witness, but John is not credited with miracles (x. 41).

i. 19-24.

The deputation consisted of Priests, Levites, and Pharisees (*v.* 24). The Baptist's father was a priest (Luke i. 5), and on that account his doings would be of special interest to members of that order. Since Pharisees are also included, it may have been a joint deputation from the Sanhedrin. The questions vividly reflect the popular Messianic expectations of the time. Elijah was expected to reappear in order to prepare the world for Messiah's advent (Mal. iv. 5; Matt. xvii. 9-13). The 'prophet' expectation is based on Deut. xviii. 15. The 'prophet' is also referred to in vi. 14; vii. 40; Matt. xvi. 14. The Baptist claims to be only a 'voice' (i. 23).

i. 25-28.

The Pharisees suspect an unauthorized performance of a religious rite. *Why then baptizest thou?* The baptism of those who were admitted into the Jewish faith from the Gentile world, the proselytes, was recognized, but why are Jews being baptized? It was expected that on the approach of the Messianic Kingdom, there would be required a general rite of purification by water for all; but John had already denied that he was either Messiah or his forerunner, Elijah (Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Zech. xiii. 1; Is. lii. 15). The Baptist points out that his baptism is not baptism in the traditional Messianic sense. His words seem to reflect a form of the Messianic expectation which held that Messiah might be already in the world of men, and remain unknown, until God called him to the office (cf. vii. 27). The *one whom ye know not* is He who came into the world He had made and *the world knew him not. The latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose.* There is a rabbinical saying of a date about A.D. 250 which runs: 'Every service which a servant will perform for his master, a disciple will do for his Rabbi, except loosing his sandal thong.'[1] Thus the Baptist, by saying that he is unworthy even to be the servant of Jesus, sharply denotes the lower quality of his own mission and ministry.

i. 29-34.

29 *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.* Jesus is here identified with the Paschal lamb. The reference in xix. 36 confirms this. In this Gospel the fact that Jesus is crucified on the day before the Passover, on which day the Paschal lamb was sacrificed, suggested the identification (p. 265). The term 'Lamb', however, was already in use in the Christian Church as a title of the exalted Christ (1 Pet. i. 18-20; Rev. v. 6, 12). The name was originally derived from Isaiah liii. 7, 10. Jesus Himself had transformed the whole Messianic conception by interpreting His Messianic vocation both in terms of the Son of man, and in terms of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah liii (see pp. 6ff.). The interpretation of Isaiah liii as a Messianic prophecy was widely

[1] SB I, 121.

current in the earliest Church. Note the expression, 'Thy holy servant Jesus' (Acts iv. 27, 30, R.V. Cf. iii. 13, R.V.; viii. 32). It is very probable that the conception became fused with that of the Paschal lamb. Paul speaks of Christ as 'our passover sacrificed for us' (1 Cor. v. 7). The Evangelist's mind is dominated by the conception of Jesus as the Paschal Lamb, and the Suffering Servant idea falls into the background. The words used here by the Baptist have a liturgical sound. They have a place at the close of the Communion Service, and may have formed part of a very early Christian liturgy. Indeed they may have been taken by the Evangelist from a profession of faith made at a contemporary service of worship at Ephesus. They are attributed to the Baptist in accordance with the Evangelist's conception that the Baptist's sole function is to testify to the person and mission of Jesus, as interpreted by the Christian Church.

Which taketh away the sin of the world. These words are best understood on the hypothesis just mentioned, that this whole utterance represents a fusing of the conceptions of the Paschal lamb and the Suffering Servant. In the Old Testament the Paschal lamb is not represented as bearing away sin. Its blood is sprinkled as a divinely appointed sign, averting the judgment of God from the families of His people. The blood of the victim is always conceived in Old Testament thought as its life, a kind of 'blood-soul' which belongs to God alone. There is no idea of the appeasement of an angry deity. This offering of the blood of the animal sacrificed established a kind of semi-mystical relationship between God and His worshippers. On the other hand, the Suffering Servant 'bare the sin of many' (Is. liii. 12). The Servant is the nation of Israel. It suffers what the other nations should have suffered. Yet there is no idea 'of a penal transference to Israel of the guilt of the nations . . . the purpose of that suffering is not to satisfy the divine justice, but to move the nations to penitence'[1] (Is. liii. 4-6). This offering of the life-blood of the chosen nation is the most precious and sacred of all gifts, whereby they also may be brought into relationship with God. Their sin is thus 'taken away', so that it is no

[1] H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament*, p 147.

longer a barrier between them and God. The merging of both conceptions is possible inasmuch as Jesus as the 'Lamb of God' cannot 'take away' sin without taking it on Himself.

There is, however, in this Gospel an absence of that profound reflection on the meaning of Christ's death which we find in Paul. The governing conception is that Jesus' death is His departure to be with the Father, and that in departing He acts as a representative of all believers in Himself. Thus do men pass from death to life. The Cross is the 'casting out' of the devil from his dominion over men (xii. 31). It is a victorious encounter with the powers of evil (cf. Colossians ii. 15). The death of Christ is also interpreted in terms of the sacrificial idea, as in the words attributed to the Baptist. The sacrificial idea is more emphasized in the first Epistle (i. 7; ii. 2, 12; iii. 5).[1]

31 Twice the Evangelist makes the Baptist say, *I knew him not* (cf. 31, 33) as though he would emphasize that John's conception of Jesus is not derived from his own independent judgment. What he knows has been revealed to him (iii. 27). His baptism with water is a rite whose sole significance is that it is a means by which the Messiah is *manifested to Israel.* The Evangelist does not mention the baptism of Jesus except thus indirectly. This procedure must be due to a desire to antagonize exaggerated claims by the Baptist's followers for their master, on the ground that he had baptized Jesus, and was therefore superior to Him. When Christian converts at Corinth formed a Pauline clique, as against those who were attached to Apollos or Cephas, Paul retorts that they were not 'baptized into the name of Paul' (1 Cor. i. 13), and could not on that account claim a sectarian allegiance to him, as their leader and father confessor. The baptism of Jesus by John would be similarly understood by the Baptist party.[2]

32-34 The Spirit *abode upon him.* In iii. 34 it is said that

[1] The reader is referred to the discussion of the passage in Dr. Vincent Taylor's *Jesus and His Sacrifice*, pp. 226ff., and in his more recent book, *The Atonement in New Testament Thought*, pp. 199ff. See also pp. 194f. of the present work.

[2] 'In some mystery cults of the day. the initiated person honoured the priest or mystagogue who introduced him into the mysteries, as his "father"; while the initiated were brethren, each viewed himself as the son of his particular director.' (Moffatt, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 11.)

God gave not the spirit 'by measure' to Jesus. The meaning is that Jesus' possession of the Spirit is not fitful, like the prophets of old on whom it came and then departed. An interesting analogy is found in Justin Martyr. Speaking of the prophecy in Is. xi. 2, *the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him*, as pointing to Christ, he says: 'These enumerated powers of the Spirit' (i.e. in Is. xi. 1ff.) 'have come on Him, not because He stood in need of them' (Justin claims that Christ is a pre-existent Divine Being) 'but because they rest on Him, i.e. would find their accomplishment in Him, so that there would be no more prophets in your nation after the ancient tradition.'[1] The Evangelist's *abode upon him* would thus signify 'rested' or had its final and absolute fulfilment in Jesus Christ. The conception is eschatological. The coming of the Spirit on the Church is regarded as the sign of 'the last days' (Acts ii. 17). The Evangelist speaks of the Spirit as a constituent element in the personality of Jesus on earth, but it was not 'given' to the Church until after the resurrection (vii. 39; xx. 22).

As a dove out of heaven. It is remarkable that the words occur in the Baptist's account of the vision in *v.* 32, but not in the message of God in *v.* 33. This would seem to indicate that the Evangelist does not regard the dove as of the essence of the vision. It is customary to interpret the dove as a symbol of gentleness, indicating the gentler character of the Christian Messiah, in contrast with the judge or warrior Messiah which was expected. This contrast is not in the mind of the Evangelist. The portrait of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel cannot be described as gentle or compassionate. It is much more likely that by the words *as a dove*, he understood simply 'bird-like' flight.[2] The dove never appears in the Old Testament as suggesting gentleness. There the bird is an emblem of sorrow (Is. xxxviii. 14); or of 'silliness' (Hos. vii. 11). As in the Synoptic Gospels also, the dove is mentioned only in order to suggest the *action* of the Spirit. In Genesis i. 2 the Spirit of God 'brooded upon the face of the waters'. 'Brooding' suggests 'moving as a bird', and it is so inter-

[1] *Trypho* 86.
[2] Abbott, *From Letter to Spirit*, p. 113.

preted by Jewish commentators. 'The Spirit of God was brooding on the face of the waters, like a dove which broods over her young.[1]

2. The Call of the First Disciples. i. 35-51.

35-39 The story begins with the Baptist's recognition of Jesus as *the Lamb of God* (pp. 113ff.). This, two of His disciples take as an invitation to follow Jesus. One is Andrew (*v.* 40). The other is unnamed, and should be identified with the 'Beloved Disciple' (pp. 82ff.). The Synoptic account (Mark i. 19) states with less inner detail that Andrew and Peter were first called, and were followed by a second pair, James and John, the sons of Zebedee.

The disciples are represented as acknowledging the Messiahship of Jesus at their first interview. In the Synoptic narrative this acknowledgment is not made, at least explicitly, until a later stage. At Caesarea Philippi, Peter confesses Jesus as Messiah in name of the rest (Matt. xvi. 13ff.; Mark viii. 27ff.; Luke ix. 18ff.). The story of the Great Confession in Mark, to which both Matthew and Luke are indebted, does not necessarily imply that Peter had never before thought of Jesus as Messiah. In Mark, Peter's answer to Jesus' question *Whom say ye that I am?* is received in silence. The disciples are forbidden to speak of Jesus as the Christ. Their conception is not yet free from secular and nationalistic elements (Mark viii. 30).[2] This injunction is followed by teaching that He must die a violent death at Jerusalem; also by a very stern rebuke of Peter because he tried to dissuade Jesus from any such conception of Messiahship. This can only mean that the disciples did previously think of Jesus as Messiah but that they were still ignorant that Jesus must win His throne as

[1] Ben Zoma A.D. 120-140; cited by Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism* I, p. 50.

[2] Matt. xvi. 17-19 did not originally belong to the Caesarea Philippi occasion. Matthew regards Peter as making a full Christian confession; yet quite inconsistently records Jesus' stern rebuke a few verses later (*vv.* 22, 23); and the prohibition of Mark viii. 30. On the authenticity of the eulogy on Peter, see *Jesus and His Church* by Dr. Newton Flew, pp. 123-138.

Messiah by suffering and death. If Jesus was conscious of His Messiahship at the Baptism, and if the Baptist had been the master of at least some of them, why should the disciples not have attached themselves at this earliest stage to a teacher who plainly had a Messianic Mission? To win the disciples over to His own interpretation of Messiahship was the task of Jesus (cf. pp. 7f.). The question of Jesus was put in order to awaken the disciples' minds to the prospect of a crucified Messiah. There is therefore no inherent improbability in the Johannine account that these disciples began with an acknowledgment of Messiahship, however imperfect.

How far the Evangelist himself recognizes that the disciples' initial confession of faith was incomplete, is another matter. The Johannine form of Peter's confession (vi. 66-71) carries with it no such reservation on Jesus' part as the Marcan account implies (Mark viii. 30). On this occasion not Peter but Judas is called 'devil' (vi. 70; cf. xiii. 2). The Fourth Evangelist regards the Baptist as recognizing from the first that Jesus is the *Lamb of God*, which clearly implies an atoning death (pp. 113f.). He does not suggest that the disciples made a similar confession. Also, the words spoken to Nathanael in i. 51 imply that the disciples' conception of His Messiahship was incomplete. Compare xi. 8. In the Farewell Discourses (xiii. 31–xvi.) the death of Jesus is the serious difficulty in the minds of the disciples. It should further be noted that this Evangelist has preserved in his account of the call of the disciples material of great historical value. In the Synoptic accounts, no mention is made of preliminary conversations with Jesus, before these men began to follow Him as intimate disciples. In Mark i. 16ff. Simon and Andrew, James and John are represented as simply obeying on the spot the invitation of Jesus, whom presumably they have met for the first time. 'And straightway they forsook their nets and followed Him.'

39 *Come and see.* Compare i. 46. These words are a conventional form of invitation in rabbinical literature, drawing attention beforehand to something new, important, or difficult.[1] The disciples are invited to 'see' what is promised

[1] SB II. 371.

to Nathanael in i. 51. The Evangelist uses two words for 'see'. One means bodily vision; the other denotes spiritual perception. The latter is used here.

40-49 These first disciples show a remarkable variety of character and experience.

ANDREW always plays a very subordinate part. He brings to Jesus Peter, who is destined to play a much more leading part in the Church than himself. There is nothing noteworthy about his call. Andrew seems to have been one to whom men turned instinctively in moments of need and perplexity (vi. 8; xii. 22).

SIMON. The new name Peter, symbolic of a deepening and strengthening of character, is conferred much earlier than in the Synoptic account (Matt. xvi. 18; Mark iii. 16). It is evident from the difference of the occasions in Matthew and Mark, that the moment at which the new name was given is not a fixed point in the Synoptic tradition. The Fourth Evangelist believes that Jesus recognized his possibilities from the first (cf. ii. 25). The giving of the name may be compared with 'Boanerges' (which Mark translates 'sons of thunder') given to James and John (Mark iii. 17). Had Jesus special 'nicknames' for some of His disciples, or did He sometimes use those given by the small company to one another? If so, it is an indication of the free and unconventional relationships between Jesus and His disciples

PHILIP. Note the other references to Philip in the Gospel (vi. 5; xii. 21; xiv. 8). Can we gather anything as to his character from these? Evidently of a practical turn of mind, he knows how much it will cost to feed the large multitude. In xiv. 8 he demands a direct proof of the Fatherhood of God.

NATHANAEL. Nathanael's question, '*Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?*' does not indicate any special wickedness. Nazareth was close to his own native village of Cana, and the words are simply the result of a prejudice, springing from a rivalry between neighbouring villages. Nathanael knew his Old Testament, and Nazareth is not mentioned in it. How then could such a place be connected with prophecies of a Messiah? Nathanael is a student of the Word; just a little 'bookish' and somewhat academic in his conception of

the places where and people in whom God is most likely to be at work. Jesus speaks of him as an '*Israelite indeed in whom is no guile*'. He represents Rabbinic Judaism at its best. He corresponds to Paul's Jew 'who is one inwardly' (Rom. ii. 28f.). (There is no reference to Jacob's guile in overreaching Esau.) The absence of *guile* in Nathanael is in contrast with the attitude of the Jewish opponents of Jesus in the Gospel. These vaunt their birthright as members of the Jewish race (viii. 39, 44). The rabbis were accustomed to speak warmly of those who studied the *Torah* 'under their own vine and figtree'; in other words 'at home'. Nathanael is such a student of the Bible. The passage he had been studying was the story of Jacob's vision (cf. i. 51 and note). His surprise is not merely that Jesus in some clairvoyant way saw him in his own home, but that He knew what was going on in his mind. To him is given the name of 'Israelite'. Like Jacob, Nathanael has a new name conferred upon him, 'Israel' (Gen. xxxii. 28), which really means 'God strives'. Nathaniel is made to see that his mental struggle, whatever it was, was the love of God striving with him. The problem raised by his Bible study cannot be solved, unless he makes inward response to Jesus' approach to him. If he is to see light, he must 'come to the light'.

It is interesting to note the various ways in which these men are brought to faith in Jesus: Andrew and John, through their trust in the Baptist's judgment of Jesus, confirmed by their own obedience to the invitation, *Come and see*; Peter, through his brother's faith; Philip, a practical man, dominated by the personality of Jesus, who in a masterful way says, *Follow me*; Philip is responsible for Nathanael's call, the student who at first resents Philip's simple acceptance of the credentials of the man from Nazareth (*v.* 46).

50-51 Jesus tells Nathanael that even his present faith is undeveloped, and that he will see '*greater things than these*'. Then in symbolic language, suggested by Jacob's vision, He tells him, and through him, them all ('ye', *v.* 51) that they still have before them a vision which will gradually unfold itself. They will follow Him, not only through cities and villages, and along the roads, but, in Wordsworth's phrase,

follow Him 'in all the fluxes and refluxes of His thought'.[1] As He went about with them doing good and they heard Him talk, as He healed men and exorcised their fears, as He spoke of the Father and gave to the lowliest and most abandoned a sense and hope of their own possibilities such as they never dreamed of, the conviction would dawn upon them that the very presence and ministry of God Himself had been revealed in His person. That is the basis of the thought that in the person and ministry of Jesus we see *heaven opened* (note the Greek perfect participle *aneōgota*, 'open and remaining open'), *and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.*

For the exposition of verse 51, and its supreme importance as the key to the Evangelist's portrait of Jesus, see pp. 6ff.

The notes of time in i. 19-51 and ii. 1 should receive attention. The happenings of i. 19-28 belong to one day. The day after is mentioned in *v.* 29 and its doings are described in *vv.* 29-34. A *third* day is described in *vv.* 35-39. A *fourth* day is introduced implicitly in *v.* 40, describing the bringing of Peter by Andrew to Jesus.[2] A *fifth* day would extend from *v.* 43 to the end of the chapter. The day of the Marriage at Cana must be preceded by at least two days, in order that Jesus and His disciples might journey from 'Bethany beyond Jordan' (or Bethabara according to some readings) to Cana in Galilee, about sixty miles. The marriage is stated to have taken place *on the third day*, i.e. from the day mentioned in *v.* 43. Thus we are given a report of Jesus' movements for one week, preceding the beginning of His ministry, which is introduced by the Miracle at Cana. Evidently underlying i. 19—ii. 1 there is a block of material which the Evangelist uses. It had been cast in a kind of diary form. This points ultimately to someone who remembered the happenings of one momentous week before the public ministry began, and whose recollections, probably in written form, were available. That he should thus preserve the chronological arrangement of his source indicates that the stories of the Baptist and of the call of the various disciples have an historical basis.

[1] Quoted by T. R. Glover, *The Nature and Purpose of a Christian Society*, p. 46.

[2] In *v.* 41 a reading 'early' (i.e. early next day) instead of 'first' is found in some manuscripts. This would explicitly introduce the fourth day; but the manuscript authority is insufficient.

3. Two Symbolic 'Signs'. ii. 1-22.

(1) *The Marriage at Cana* (ii. 1-11) symbolizes at the beginning of the ministry the mission of Jesus, which is to transform the water of Judaism into the wine of the Christian Gospel.

(2) *The Cleansing of the Temple* (ii. 13-22) chronologically belongs to the close of the ministry, but here symbolizes the fact that its outcome is that the Temple must give way to the Church, the 'body of Christ' (*vv.* 19-22).

The Marriage at Cana. ii. 1-11.

In our approach to this story we ought not first to concern ourselves with the general question of the supernatural. The Evangelist found the basis of this story in the traditional records of the ministry of Jesus, and selects it for his own purpose. To him it is an instrument to convey the truth that *Jesus manifested his glory and his disciples believed on him* (*v.* 11; cf. note on 'Glory', pp. 103ff.). It is profitless to attempt to 'rationalize' such stories. Whatever its origin, it must be assumed that the Evangelist regards the story as describing an actual occurrence (cf. pp. 29f.). He found in it a rich means of expression in symbol of the course of Christ's ministry, now about to be inaugurated. The *water-pots* would readily symbolize the Mosaic religion, with all its cleansing ritual. *Wine* symbolizes readily the religion of the Spirit.

4 *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* In Greek the word translated *Woman* has no derogatory sense. It means something like 'Madam'. Jesus uses the same word in addressing His Mother at the foot of the Cross (xix. 26). At the same time there is a strange aloofness in the words. The action Jesus is asked to take will be the inaugural act of His ministry, which is to be undertaken at no human suggestion. 5 Even His mother recognizes His autonomy; *Whatsoever he saith unto you do* (see pp. 231f.).

6 The quantity of water is great, and the supply of wine is consequently enormous—120 gallons! This, together with the somewhat vulgar pleasantry of the 'master of ceremonies' (*when men have drunk freely, v.* 10) suggests that underlying the narrative are certain vestigial remains of a popular story,

which has become absorbed into the Christian tradition. The *water-pots of stone* were there in order that the guests might have water poured on their hands according to the ceremonial regulations, and that the various utensils might be duly cleansed (Mark vii. 2-5).

8 The *governor of the feast* would be one of the principal guests who was appointed to preside. Compare *arbiter bibendi* (Horace, *Odes* ii. 7). It is remarkable that no details of any action by Jesus are given. All is accomplished by His creative 'Word' (cf. *v.* 5).

The Evangelist's mind is fixed, not on the heightening of the physical miracle, but on encouraging the belief that the spiritual resources of Christ provided in the Christian Gospel are inexhaustible. Here the actual narrative is secondary, the symbolism is everything. It is, however, to be noted that the Evangelist whose conception of Christ's person is that He belongs to the Divine sphere, has yet no difficulty in representing Him as using His Divine power, in order to sustain human joy.

9 *The servants which had drawn the water knew.* This parenthesis is meant to be significant. It is possible to make use of what Christ brings to our lives, without knowing Him or acknowledging Him, or seeking to make Him known. This remark about the *servants* is to be taken with *v.* 11, where Christ's 'glory' produces 'belief' only in His disciples. To experience the demands of Christian service as an expenditure of faith and love always arouses a sense of dependence on Christ as the ultimate source of power. 11 *This beginning of his signs.* The Evangelist evidently means the story to introduce the public ministry.

Stories of the miraculous creation of wine are told of the god Dionysus.[1] He is said to have filled sealed and empty kettles with wine.[2] His devotees, the Bacchantes, while under his inspiration, are depicted as making both water and wine to gush forth from the earth.[3] Estlin Carpenter suggests that the

[1] Cf. Hoskyns *FG* i. 199ff.
[2] Pausanias, *Description of Greece* vi. 26. 1.
[3] Euripides, *Bacchae*, 704ff.

Evangelist has transformed 'the miracles of Dionysus into an imaginative symbol of the glory of Christ'.[1] The whole style of the Johannine narrative of the Cana miracle is itself sufficient to disprove this. In addition, the Evangelist in his battle with the Docetists could not afford to 'transform' mythical stories into allegedly historical incidents (cf. p. 240). E. A. Abbott[2] recalls a passage from Philo, where he is allegorizing Gen. xiv. 18. He regards Melchisedek as symbolizing the Logos. He speaks of the Word thus: 'Let him bring forth wine instead of water and give your souls to drink. Let him fill them with unmixed wine in order that they may be wholly overcome with a divine intoxication, more sober than sobriety itself'.[3] In the Odes of Solomon the words occur, 'I drank and was inebriated with the living water that doth not die, and my inebriation was not without knowledge'.[4] There is no evidence that the Ode in question is a Christian composition, and the language employed, as well as Philo's words, only suggest that the idea of inebriation, 'not without knowledge more sober than sobriety itself', has its place in Jewish mystical expression. The conception of inebriation by the Spirit is suggested in Eph. v. 18. Jesus Himself speaks of His teaching as 'new wine' (Mark ii. 22; Luke v. 38). He speaks of the Kingdom of God as a marriage feast (Matt. xxii. 2). He Himself is spoken of as the 'Bridegroom' (Mark ii. 19, 20). Whatever may have been the form in which the popular story came into the hands of the Evangelist, his symbolic use of it is clearly determined by current religious phraseology. He also wishes to describe a creative act of the Word at the very beginning of the ministry. It is much more important to understand the symbolical meaning of this story than to attempt to reconstruct the facts.

12 Here occurs one of the somewhat vague notes of Jesus' movements which characterize the Gospel. It is meant to provide a transition to the next story.

The Cleansing of the Temple. ii. 13-22.

It is a standing difficulty of Johannine interpretation that the Cleansing of the Temple is put at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry. The other three Gospels all place it at the close, and represent it as the incident which provoked His

[1] *The Johannine Writings*, p. 380.
[2] *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, p. 1800.
[3] *Allegories of the Sacred Laws* III. 82, Loeb I, p. 421f.
[4] Ode xi. 7, 8. Cf. p. 52.

arrest. We may reject the theory that the Temple was twice cleansed. Most commentators prefer the Synoptic chronology. It is very difficult to believe that Jesus would thus have prejudiced His ministry at the outset in the eyes of the ecclesiastical authorities. Would not such an action at this stage rightly be included in that type of temptation symbolized as jumping from the 'pinnacle of the temple'? (Matt. iv. 5, 6; Luke iv. 9-12.) To act as Jesus does here, without giving any time, as would be the case later, to ensure that popular feeling was on His side, would have been to make a plunge to certain death. The presence of a large number of Galilean pilgrims and other sympathizers afforded the fruitful opportunity.[1]

The place here given to the Cleansing by the Evangelist hardly suggests that he was acquainted with the Synoptic Gospels. The narrative is much fuller in this gospel. Any verbal agreements are quite consistent with the hypothesis that the Evangelist is making use of a tradition of his own, which included certain verbal parallels. The probability is that the Evangelist gives the story its present place in order to describe by means of it the ultimate outcome of Jesus' ministry. The story of the Marriage at Cana symbolizes its inauguration. The Cleansing of the Temple, culminating in the prophetic saying of *v.* 19, fitly symbolizes the downfall of Judaism and the rise of the Christian Church (see notes). From the day of the Passion the temple of stones lay under doom.[2] There is no chronological connexion with the preceding story or with what follows. These two stories serve as 'title-page vignettes to the story of the ministry that follows'. It may further be suggested that such a use of this story indicates that as it came to the Evangelist, it had no definite place in the traditions of the ministry, and therefore that Mark was not accessible to him.[3] The Evangelist's purpose, however, is not chronological, but symbolical. The real emphasis in the Evangelist's mind is on the words of Jesus recorded in *v.* 19.

14 *Oxen, sheep and doves.* The animals were sold for

[1] For a defence of the Johannine dating of the incident see Howard *FGRC*, pp. 175f.
[2] Cf. Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, p. 163.
[3] Gardner-Smith *SJSG*, p. 13.

sacrifice for the convenience of pilgrims. Gradually the dealers had come to have their stalls within the Court of the Gentiles. The *changers of money* were there that Roman coins might be changed into Jewish, which were alone valid for the Temple treasury. Fees were exacted, and no doubt there was profiteering. The whole traffic represented a commercial monopoly, in which the Temple authorities were deeply interested. It could not be carried on without noise. 'We can picture to ourselves the scene around the table of an Eastern money-changer—the weighing of the coins, deductions for loss of weight, arguing, disputing, bargaining.'[1]

16 Truly the Temple had become *an house of merchandise*! It is erroneous to suppose that Jesus' action is an attack on the whole sacrificial system. His motive was one of reverence for *my Father's house*, and of deep concern that the spirit of worship should thus be dissipated at its very door. It should also be remembered that the collection and management of the Temple revenues, which included the provision of such facilities to pilgrims, were quite legitimate.[2] The opposition of Jesus was due to the fact that these interests had become so prominent as to endanger the spirit of worship. The worshipper's approach to God in His house must be undimmed and unhindered by the obtrusion of the secular.[3]

15 *A scourge of cords* (R.V.) It was probably made from the rushes which formed the bedding of the cattle. Its use was necessary in order to drive them out. This Evangelist alone records this detail, and the vividness of his other details is remarkable. He *cast out* (rather 'drove out') the sheep and oxen, *poured out* ('scattered') the changers' money, *overthrew their tables*. 16 The doves being in cages, Jesus said to their owners, *Take these things hence*. The Evangelist must have had access to some source containing the account of an eye-witness of the scene.

17 *The zeal of thine house shall eat me up* (R.V.). The

[1] A. Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* I. 368.

[2] See G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem* I. Chapter VII.

[3] Reverence as a motive is also indicated in His revival of a Jewish regulation that the Temple Courts should not be made a thoroughfare, a short cut from one part of the city to another (Mark xi. 16), by those engaged in shopping expeditions. Cf. Josephus, *Against Apion* ii. 8; Mishnah, *Berakoth*, 9, 5.

words are taken from Ps. lxix. 9. It was the habit of the early Christians to find prophetic anticipations of Christ's actions and of the happenings in His life, particularly the Crucifixion, in the Old Testament. On this question see more fully pp. 26of.

18 Jesus has assumed Messianic authority (Malachi iii. 1-3). He must now vindicate it by a 'sign from heaven' as a credential of Messiahship.[1] It is noticeable that the justice of what He has done is not questioned, and it may be assumed that He had much popular support. 19 His vindication is on lines analogous to Matt. xii. 38-40. *Destroy this temple . . . raise it up.* Compare Matt. xii. 6. The imperative is really a future. 'Ye will destroy the religious significance of this temple by your practices. On its ruins I will raise another in three days.' One form or another of these words played an important part in the evidence at the trial of Jesus (Mark xiv. 58; Matt. xxvi. 61). They were flung at Him on the Cross (Matt. xxvii. 40; Mark xv. 29). Here the Evangelist gives his own interpretation of them.

21 *He spake of the temple of his body.* He has in mind the Pauline conception of the Church as the 'body' of Christ, i.e. His instrument for carrying on His work after the Resurrection (1 Cor. xii. 12-27). It is unlikely that the reference is to Christ's physical body. The Resurrection is never regarded in the New Testament as the act of Christ Himself. It is the supreme act of God's almighty power (Rom. vi. 4. See note on x. 17). This Evangelist regards the ascended Christ as the creator of the Church (see note on xx. 22f.).[2]

20-22 *Forty and six years.* The Temple, begun in 20-19 B.C., was completed by Herod Agrippa II in A.D. 63-4. Forty-six years from the date of beginning the structure would be A.D. 26-7. The words of *v.* 19 quoted against Jesus by His accusers at His trial (Mark xiv. 58; xv. 29) are understood by

[1] An example of the kind of sign expected is found in a very late rabbinic comment: 'When the King, the Messiah, shall be revealed, he will come and stand on the roof of the temple. Then will he proclaim to the Israelites and say: Ye afflicted ones, the time of your deliverance is here, and if you do not believe it, behold my Light which streams over you.' The speaker then quotes Is. lx. 1. Montefiore and Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology*, 1657 (*Pesikta Rabbati*, 162a-162b).

[2] See R. Newton Flew, *Jesus and His Church*, pp. 55ff.

the disciples only after the Resurrection, when the Church came into being. The *scripture* which they believed may be such prophecies as are quoted in Acts ii. 17-36.

4. The Universal Appeal of the Gospel. ii. 23–iv. 54.

Types of Christian converts are Nicodemus the Jew, the Samaritan Woman, the Gentile Nobleman. The variety of Christ's appeal is also illustrated in the discourse that follows the interview with Nicodemus, and that which is interwoven with the story of the Samaritan Woman; also in the Gentile's simple belief in the 'word' of Jesus (iv. 50).

ii. 23-25 is a general introduction to this section.

ii. 23 Here is presupposed a previous ministry of some duration, and indicated that, according to the chronology of this Gospel, Jesus visited Jerusalem on at least two Passover occasions.

Beholding the signs which he did. Belief on the mere ground of miracles is elsewhere depreciated (iv. 48; vi. 26). Translate 'so long as they were beholding' (cf. p. 4).

24 *Jesus did not trust himself unto them.* Here there is a play on words which cannot accurately be rendered in English. *Trust* (R.V.) in our version is also the word translated 'believe' in *v.* 23. Jesus could not trust their faith. We have good reason to distrust our own if it is dependent on the accuracy of the record of this or that miracle.

25 The Divine intuition of Jesus is a leading conception of the Evangelist. *He needed not that anyone should bear witness concerning man* ('tell Him the facts about human nature'). These facts are both men's deeds and their innermost thoughts and purposes. This intuition of Jesus is shown by the variety of His appeal in the three stories which follow.

(1) *Nicodemus the Pharisee*—'Birth from Above' (iii. 1-21).

1 The Greek form of the name need not excite surprise. Jews sometimes borrowed Greek names. He is not mentioned except in this Gospel. He is a Pharisee, and *a ruler of the Jews,* i.e. a ruling authority and member of the Sanhedrin (vii. 50). He is evidently a man of some wealth, and along

with Joseph of Arimathea brings a lavish amount of spices in order to embalm the body of Jesus (xix. 39). In ii. 23, *signs* wrought by Jesus are mentioned. We may infer that the story actually belongs to a later stage in the ministry, nearer the closing days. The mention of the crucifixion in *v.* 14 would also suggest this.

2 *By night.* The words do not necessarily accuse Nicodemus of timidity, and of unwillingness to come into the open. The time chosen might equally well be determined by a desire for a private interview. His actual motive should not be interpreted by *v.* 21. It is probable that he regarded Jesus as a fellow rabbi (*v.* 10) or teacher of the Law. *These miracles:* Rabbis also are recorded to have worked miracles, and the validity and authority of their teaching were popularly judged by that fact. It is recorded of Rabbi Eliezer (A.D. 90–130) that in a disputation with other teachers he is said to have worked certain miracles in order to accredit his teaching.[1] Nicodemus himself is called a rabbi by Jesus (*v.* 10). In his zeal for study of the Torah, he seeks an opportunity for discussion with such a divinely accredited teacher. Did he come *by night* because he could not come by day, being occupied with his trade, whatever it was? Even the rabbi had to learn a trade, whether he practised it as Paul did, or not. 'He who does not teach his son a trade, teaches him robbery.'[2] The rabbi was not supposed to be paid for his tuition. Many of the most eminent scholars, as is well known, supported themselves and their families by manual labour, some of them by unskilled labour.[3] *Night* study of the Torah was regarded in rabbinical circles as eminently praiseworthy. We are told that discussions among experts were carried on 'even to cockcrow'. Such night discussions of the Torah were regarded as symptoms of deep religious zeal, much as evening

[1] Several stories are recorded of rabbis who worked miracles by prayer. One, Nakdimon b. Gorion (who may have been a contemporary of Jesus, and whose name is really a form of 'Nicodemus'), is recorded to have brought rain. It may be possible to identify him with the Nicodemus of the gospel. If so, is Nicodemus represented here as coming to Jesus, impressed by the superior quality and variety of Jesus' miracles as compared with his own? (ii. 23). See Montefiore and Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology*, 890 (Bab. Talmud *Bab. M.* 59b); *ib.* 986 (*Taanith*, 19b-20a).

[2] Montefiore and Loewe, *op. cit.*, 1234 (Tosefta *Kiddoshin*, i. 11).

[3] Moore *JFC* ii. 127, 177.

meetings for the study of the Bible, after work hours, would be regarded to-day. The study of the Torah was spoken of as worship, equally with prayer (e.g. Joshua i. 8).[1]

3 Nicodemus, who has come in order to study the Law, is suddenly confronted with the religion of the Spirit. Nicodemus no doubt had his questionings and inward dissatisfactions like Paul. He is told that to *see the Kingdom of God* means a new birth. Probably *born again* should be translated ' born from above '. The Greek is ambiguous, but the ambiguity may actually be intended by the Evangelist. *Born again* corresponds to Nicodemus' wistful, but wilfully absurd interpretation of Jesus' words. On the other hand, the Spirit, like the wind, is from above (*v.* 8). In any case, ' birth from above ' includes the idea of being *born again* There is no real difference between ' seeing ' the Kingdom and ' entering into ' the Kingdom (*v.* 5) To speak of a man's having ' seen ' life means that he has ' entered into ' or experienced life. To ' see death ' is to enter into the experience of death.

The term *Kingdom of God*, so common on Jesus' lips in the Synoptic Gospels, is used only here in this Gospel. In John xviii. 36 Jesus speaks of ' my Kingdom '. ' Eternal life ' or simply ' life ' is used instead elsewhere. Yet, although the term practically disappears in the Fourth Gospel, as in Paul's writings, because it would be unintelligible to the Greek world, its content remains. When we think of a ' kingdom ', we mean the domain over which a king rules. The primary meaning of *Kingdom of God* in the Synoptic Gospels is the ' kingship ' or reign of God, His actively expressed sovereign will. The idea is derived from Jewish thought. *Malkuth* (' kingship ') is the active and absolute sovereignty of God exercised chiefly on behalf of Israel against her oppressors, and through Israel as His instrument inaugurating a new world order in which all men are meant to be included. In the Synoptic Gospels, the present world is regarded as under the power of hostile demonic powers, who inflict upon men all kinds of sickness and misfortune. Some are actually ' demon-possessed ', i.e. out of their minds. The belief was widely held that when Messiah comes, God will delegate to Him His own

[1] SB II. 419ff ; Moore *JFC* i. 239ff. There can be no doubt that Jesus Himself had rabbinical training, and that He sometimes uses rabbinical methods in His interpretations of Scripture (e g. Mark xii. 18-27; cf. T. W. Manson, *Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 47ff.). He was not, however, looked upon as a pupil with a regular ' diploma ' (see note on vii. 15).

sovereign power, in order that the power of the demons may be broken (cf. Matt. viii. 29; xii. 28; Luke xi. 20). Their sway was regarded as permitted by God for the chastisement of men. We meet with a similar conception in Paul's letters, when he speaks of 'principalities and powers' (Rom. viii. 38), 'princes of this world' (1 Cor. ii. 8), 'rulers of the darkness of this world' (Eph. vi. 12). Jesus' own conception of His ministry and person as Messianic is that in Himself, and in His healing and forgiving ministry, the whole power of the 'Kingdom' is already present (xii. 28; Luke xi. 20). It has already been pointed out that the 'devils' whose power afflicts men in the present 'age', disappear in the Fourth Gospel (p. 3), but the belief in Satan, their chief, is retained. He is the 'Prince of this world' who is overthrown by the 'lifting up' of Jesus (xii. 31). This victory represents the final intervention of God for the redemption of men. In the Johannine thought, God's power or 'glory' (pp. 103ff.) is already manifest in the miracles or 'signs' wrought by Jesus during His ministry. The coming of the 'Word made flesh' is the implanting of the seed of a new world. Thus the idea of actual breaking in of the complete power of God is everywhere present in the thought of the Fourth Evangelist. The sovereign power and love of God as manifested in the person and ministry of Jesus, conferring eternal life, appears in different forms in the Fourth Gospel (iii. 16; x. 30; xiv. 10). The Son of Man 'came down from heaven' (iii. 13). The 'Word of God' is incarnate in the Person of Jesus (i. 14).

This Evangelist regards the *Kingdom of God* as realized on earth, through the experience of individuals. When men are 'born from above' or 'born again', it is by the power of the Spirit of God (iii. 5). Such men are admitted into the upper world of 'light'. They walk in the light, are themselves transformed, *enter into* the Kingdom, *see* the Kingdom, and are alone capable of realizing God's purpose of love towards men. The sovereignty of God is the sovereignty of love, whose nature and attitude is always determined by the Divine Love manifested in the Son (xvii. 26). For a somewhat fuller treatment of the conception of the 'Kingdom' as both present and future in this Gospel, see pp. 11ff.

Nicodemus is offered, not some fresh light on ways of becoming 'righteous', but, at the start, that which he had made his goal—the becoming 'a child of God' here and now (*v.* 3). He may even now, in virtue of the power of the Kingdom, be 'born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God'. This is a 'right' which

is not merited but given (i. 12f., R.V.). We are moving in the same region of thought as Paul's great doctrine of 'justification by faith' opposed to salvation by merit through the works of the Law. This love of God, which gives us our place as children in the family of God and is trustfully accepted, enables men themselves to become the living pattern and source of the 'good life' (1 John iv. 19, R.V.). This sovereign love is an active reality on earth in Jesus and His ministry (iii. 16). When Jesus offered His friendship to 'sinners' without condition, they became conscious of 'second birth', and moral results of a far-reaching kind followed.

The conception of the second birth, or 'birth from above', is deeply ethical. It means birth into a new world, with new demands and responsibilities, which is still the old world seen with different eyes. Jesus and Nicodemus are not as yet living in the same world. 'A cat may look at a king, but it is not a king that the cat sees.' The Pharisaism so sternly denounced by Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels was a degraded type, and it is a misfortune that we have no picture of the Pharisaism of Jesus' day save what is there given. Yet, even if we admit, as we must, that Pharisaism preserved all that was finest in Judaism, both spiritually and ethically, and that the best Pharisaism was far from looking upon the poor, the sinful and the outcast with indifference, we must also note the admission, which is also frankly made by some Jewish scholars, that there is a new note and attitude in Jesus' conduct towards these. 'There was in the Pharisaism of all ages a real anxiety to make the return of the sinner easy. It was inclined to leave the initiative to the sinner, except that it always maintained God's readiness to take the first step. Jesus in His attitude towards sin and sinners was more inclined to take the initiative.'[1] It is precisely this initiative which marks the 'new world' into which men are born, and characterizes Jesus' attitude from first to last. To the Pharisee, the sinner was unrepentant. To Jesus he was lost, and must be found. The Rabbi was ever so willing to teach those who came to hear him in the synagogue or in a house of learning. Jesus taught everywhere, and went forth

[1] Abraham, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, I, p. 58.

actively as His life's mission, to seek out those who were in spiritual sickness and need in order to help and cure them, and bring them to the Father. He is doing 'what He seeth the Father doing'. He is exercising the power of the 'Kingdom' of God. The ethical demands of the 'new birth' appear in *vv.* 19-21 of this chapter, but are more strongly emphasized in the First Epistle. To be 'begotten of God' is to do righteousness (1 John ii. 29) and to 'love' (1 John iv. 7; cf. iii. 7-12). We miss the vivid Synoptic pictures of the 'Friend of publicans and sinners' at work in this Gospel, but the Evangelist could assume that his readers were as familiar with these as he himself was. He is primarily concerned to present a picture of Jesus not merely as the example, but as the creative source of all love (cf. *v.* 16 and 1 John iv. 19 (R.V.), 20f.).

4 *How can a man be born when he is old?* Nicodemus' question is not merely a stupid one, born of complete misunderstanding. Probably Nicodemus understood only too well both the spiritual and moral demand made on him. To be born when he is old, means a revolutionary change of a man's personal relationship to God and towards his fellows. He is *old*, not necessarily in years, but in the sense that his habits of thought and life are formed and traditional. His question is not hopeless so much as wistful. Can human nature be changed? The underlying physical conception in the second half of the verse is not a mere absurdity. The words mean 'Can a man a second time become what he was when he was first conceived, and be created all over again?'

5 *Born of water and the Spirit.* A difficult verse. What is meant by *water*?

(*a*) Is there any reference to John's baptism? This would imply that Nicodemus had been influenced by the Baptist movement. It is, however, unlikely that the Evangelist would thus suggest that baptism at John's hands was a prelude to the Christian baptism with the Spirit, inasmuch as he always represents John as but a *voice*. Verses 27ff. imply that John himself recognizes that the baptism which he practised was no more than a means of preparing the way for the coming

ot One greater than himself, and of revealing Christ to himself.

(*b*) The reference is to the Christian rite. The intention is to assert that it is always accompanied by the gift of the Spirit. There is no reason to think that the words are aimed at any superstitious *opus operans* view of Christian Baptism.[1] In Ephesians v. 26 Christ is said to have 'cleansed' the Church 'by the washing of water with the word' ('cleansing her in the bath of Baptism as she utters her confession') (Moffatt). Cf. Titus iii. 5. The moment of baptism for the earliest Christian converts was a moment of deepest spiritual experience, which included a simple confession of loyalty to Christ and a strenuous sense of moral obligation and willingness for sacrifice. 1 Peter iii. 21 mentions 'the answer of a good conscience towards God' as part of the baptismal rite. The word translated 'answer' more probably means the asking of a question which the candidate was meant to answer sincerely, a baptismal vow. The work of the Spirit that must accompany baptism would be thus apparent in the candidate's confession. It is a characteristic Johannine anachronism that Jesus should thus refer to a rite practised by His followers after His resurrection. The statement in iii. 22 that Jesus Himself baptized is contradicted in iv. 2.[2] There is no trace in the Synoptic tradition that either Jesus or His disciples baptized during His lifetime.

(*c*) Dr. Odeberg[3] has suggested that *water* here is used in a sense derived from Jewish mystical thought and signifies a kind of divine efflux or creative energy. In certain rabbinical writings there are speculations regarding these

[1] The fact that Baptism and the gift of the Spirit in the New Testament are so often conjoined is psychologically intelligible. The moment of Christian Baptism meant complete severance of relations with the old religion, with home and friends. It had a revolutionary significance in all social and business relationships. It meant open confession of Christ as Lord. The sense of Christ's presence as the Spirit in a man's heart must have been very real at such a moment. See Paul's emotional description of baptism in Rom. vi. 2f.

[2] iv. 2 occurs in a series of verses (1-3) in which there is good reason to see the hand of an editor. The meaning of the parenthesis may be to point out that while Jesus Himself did not baptize, He allowed His disciples to do so, and thereby sanctioned the Christian rite, which is exactly the meaning in iii. 5.

[3] *The Fourth Gospel*, pp. 48ff.

' celestial waters ', based on Gen. i. 7, where the ' waters above the firmament are divided from the waters under the firmament '. The waters above came to acquire a mystical meaning, and to represent a source of spiritual creation. That some such idea is in the mind of the Evangelist is rendered probable by the use made of the idea of spiritual ' seed ' in 1 John iii. 9. ' Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed remaineth in him.' Also, the general thought of the dialogue alternates between the idea of physical and spiritual birth (*v* 6). To be *born of water and the Spirit* would thus mean to be born of spiritual water, ' born from above '. There is the same contrast between physical and spiritual birth in i. 13. It may also be recalled how often water represents in Scripture the Divine gift (Is. lv. 1). ' Living water ' in this Gospel means water that gives life (iv. 10, 14). In vii. 38f. ' living water ' symbolizes the Spirit. It is quite consistent with the Johannine thought that to be *born of water and the Spirit* should mean to be born of a spiritual seed, in contrast with the seed or *semen* of physical generation (cf. 1 Peter i. 23).

Dr. Odeberg has convinced me that my suggestion in an earlier edition that *water* here symbolizes the fact of physical birth is wrong. He rejects the idea that there is any reference in the words to Christian baptism. Yet it would be characteristic of the Johannine thought that interpretations (*b*) and (*c*) should both be relevant. The water of baptism might very well symbolize the ' water of the Spirit '. In the words *born of water and the Spirit*, a deeply Christian view of Baptism is expressed. Adult baptism alone is referred to, based on the conception fundamental to the Evangelist's thought, that believers are begotten by a kind of spiritual ' seed ' (1 John iii. 9), begotten of God into a new kind of life. They become ' children of God '. The advent of the Kingdom of God in the person of Jesus is the implanting of the seed of a new world. The old world is worn out and doomed to die. The new world is coming to birth. ' Can this miracle be repeated in a world that has for the second time grown old? This is the central question of Christianity to-day.'[1]

[1] C. Dawson, *Beyond Politics*, pp. 89ff.

REGENERATION IN HELLENISTIC RELIGION

The idea of the new birth has often been related to a similar conception in Hellenistic religion, particularly the Hermetic and Mystery religions. There it was a mystical or ecstatic experience, whereby the human mortal essence of the initiate was transformed into a divine immortal essence by communion with the deity. The man was deified, *in eternum renatus*. It is possible that language of this kind may have been familiar in Ephesian circles, but it is important to note that the Johannine conception has little in common with it but the name. The new birth in the Johannine thought is far removed from any idea of deification. God remains God, and man remains man. The life which the Christian disciple lives is a 'life in the flesh', because the *Word became flesh*. Jesus alone is both divine and human, and it is through Him alone that the gift of the new birth comes; not through magical formula or mystic initiation, but through His 'Word'. '*The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life*' (vi. 63). The Mystery-worshipper who is reborn feels himself under the sure protection of his patron deity. Certain changes in character might follow, but falling far short of the demands of the Sermon on the Mount. It may be that in the First Epistle when the writer speaks of spiritual 'seed' he is borrowing a word from Hellenistic religion (1 John iii. 9; cf. James i. 18). But like all such early Christian borrowings, what is borrowed is transformed and filled with quite new content. A deep and impassable gulf separates the experience of the Mystery-worshipper and that of the Christian. 'In the sense understood by the Mystery-worshipper, the Christian has experienced nothing."[1] The Christian experience alone preserves a truly personal relationship between God and His children.

6-8 Verses 6-8 are a further elaboration of the conception of spiritual birth, in contrast with physical birth. The Spirit's action is as independent of human action as the wind. Men have no control over it, no knowledge of its whence or whither. We must always be prepared for what is surprising and unexpected in God's dealing with men. Yet the effect is real, *Thou hearest the sound thereof*. Its effect is also, above

[1] Buchsel, *Johannes und der Hellenistische Syncretismus*, p. 64. See also pp. 75ff. of the present work.

all, personal. *Sound* is really 'voice' (R.V.). In the Evangelist's mind the meaning swiftly passes from *pneuma* meaning *wind*, to *pneuma* meaning *spirit*. The *Spirit* is personal because it is God in action. God is a person and 'speaks' to men, dealing with them in a personal way. He thus recreates them as 'children of God' not magically, without the co-operation of their own will.

9-10 *How can these things be?* Nicodemus is ignorant of any cause that can produce such an effect. Jesus reproaches him that, as *the teacher of Israel*, he should be so ignorant. The article is significant, 'the well-known teacher'. Rabbinical thought regarded the era of the Spirit as passed with the death of the last of the prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. The renewal of the gift of the Spirit belonged to the future age, when the Kingdom of God comes. Meantime all inspiration becomes little more than a fitful illumination of the mind, and is given only to the teacher and student of the Torah.[1]

11 The dialogue now passes into monologue, in which it is difficult to tell where words are meant to be taken as uttered by Jesus, and when the Evangelist's own reflection begins. *We speak*, etc. Jesus suddenly speaks in the plural, as though identifying Himself with the message of the Christian Church.

12 What are the *earthly things* as distinct from the *heavenly things* of *v.* 12? The utterance relapses into the first person, and the words must refer to the immediate content. Probably the best explanation is that Jesus has been endeavouring by means of natural symbols (the 'wind', or 'physical birth', or 'water') to convey the truth, and now He is about to tell Nicodemus that only He Himself, who comes from heaven, can reveal the source of this new spiritual birth.[2] 13 *No man hath ascended into heaven but he that descended out of heaven even the Son of Man (which is in heaven)* (R.V.). The words in brackets are omitted in many good manuscripts, but they are quite consistent with the thought of the Gospel. Jesus is One who is all the time, in unbroken relation with heaven, i.e. with God.[3] The 'ascent into heaven' is not the

[1] Cf. Moore *JFC* I. pp. 355.
[2] See note on xvi. 25.
[3] See pp. 6ff.

final ascension of xx. 17. Although the meaning is expressed in spatial terms, it is that the 'Son of Man' alone is privileged to know heavenly secrets and to reveal them (cf. Matt. xi. 27). Jesus is King in the Kingdom of truth (xviii. 37). *No man hath ascended* has a certain polemical reference, like *no man hath seen God at any time* (i. 18). The words are aimed at the statements in some of the Jewish apocalyptic writings, where specially privileged persons like Enoch, or Levi, or Isaiah, are spoken of as ascending into heaven and beholding heavenly mysteries. The *heavenly things* spoken of in *v.* 12 are the revelation of God's love and redemptive purpose described in *v.* 16. The heavenly mysteries are an open secret to those who believe in Christ, and accept the truth; *he that hath seen me hath seen the Father* (xiv. 9). This heavenly mystery is made known only through Jesus, the heavenly Son of Man. Of this Nicodemus is as yet in ignorance. Jesus has been speaking to him in *earthly* or symbolic terms, and he does not believe. There is no truth from above except through the Son of Man (cf. xvi. 25 and notes).

14 The analogy of *the serpent in the wilderness* (Num. xxi. 8f.) is used to introduce the idea of the 'lifting up' of the Son of Man. The reference is to the Crucifixion, which is prevailingly regarded in this Gospel as the first step in the final Ascension of Jesus (cf. xii. 32). What distinguishes this final Ascension through suffering and death from the ascension spoken of in *v.* 13 is that thereby Jesus as the revealer of God's love and the Giver of the Spirit becomes accessible to all men (xii. 32; vii. 39). The central point in the analogy of the brazen serpent is that it was raised up that all might see it.[1] There is no need for intricate and curious questionings about the nature of the Atonement, based on the bite of the serpent as a symbol of sin. The Cross is compared with the brazen serpent only in one point, *visibility and availability for all.* 15 The look brought life (cf. vi 40 and note on *v.* 16). The Evangelist puts forward no theory about the efficacy of the death of Christ. Like Paul he has seen the preaching of the Cross in its results, as God's 'saving dynamic' (Rom. i. 16).

16 *God so loved the world . . . have eternal life.* At this

[1] Mishnah, *Rosh*, iii. 8. The image lifts thought to God; is no idol.

point, there begins almost imperceptibly a reflective utterance of the Evangelist on the theme of the Cross. The words describe the *heavenly things* spoken of in *v.* 12. They are really a re-statement from the Godward side of the words in *vv.* 14, 15, *so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever*, etc. The whole meaning of these words depend on our interpretation of the word translated *must*. We may compare the words of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels, ' The Son of Man *must* suffer ' (Mark viii. 31). The ' must ' expresses no mere tragic necessity, forced upon Jesus. It is not, as someone has said, a blind but a *seeing* necessity. Hostile forces were indeed arraying themselves against Him. Their enmity was ruthless, and He must be crushed. To those who cannot recognize the unique filial God-consciousness of Jesus, that His ' meat is to do the will of God and to accomplish His work ' (iv. 34), the death of Jesus appears to be determined by outward constraint. Yet for Him the outward circumstances become an inward necessity, a voluntary acceptance of the will and purpose of God.[1] *As the Father gave me commandment so I do* (xiv. 31; x. 18). Submission to the ' lifting up ' on the Cross is as much a divine commandment for the saving of the world as Moses' act in ' lifting up ' the serpent was for the healing of the people. It is in itself not only an act of Christ, but an act of God. There is complete agreement of will between Christ and the Father. Thus *v.* 16 is not merely a theological reflection of the Evangelist, but a statement of the Christian Gospel of the Cross. It describes a heavenly ' mystery ', which the Son of Man discloses in word and act.

17 The Evangelist further interprets the Cross as Judgment. Christ is thus lifted up, and shares the Divine throne. The Judgment Day is now, and not only in the future. (See notes on *vv.* 20-29 for a fuller treatment.) The immediate purpose of Jesus' coming is not to ' judge ' men, i.e. to pass sentence on them, but to save them, which is an exact interpretation of Jesus' mission to the publicans and sinners. Yet rejection of Him inevitably judges. Just as a man is judged by his ignorant opinion of a great picture, or adverse criticism of a good man's work or character, so men are judged by their attitude

[1] Cf. J. Denney, *The Death of Christ*, pp. 28ff.

towards Jesus, and in particular towards the love revealed in the Cross. The primary purpose of the sun is not to cast shadows, but it does. 18 *He that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed in the name* (i.e. the Divine personality) *of the only-begotten Son of God.* The unbelief is not directed towards a dogmatic interpretation of the death on the Cross, but represents the reception given to the great Divine act recorded in iii. 16. The words are not inconsistent with the Synoptic teaching of Jesus. The decisive moment in the relationship of Jesus with His disciples came when He asked them what they thought of Him (Mark viii. 29). Peter could not fit the death on the Cross into his thinking. Jesus replies, ' Thou thinkest not as God thinks, but as man thinks ' (Mark viii. 33). Peter's thinking stopped short at the Cross, and it is sternly condemned. In matters of religious belief there is such a thing as culpable ignorance. *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do* (Luke xxiii. 34). We become aware of our inherent limitations of thought when we begin to consider dogmatic theological statements about the meaning of the Cross. It is another matter when we are confronted with the submission of Jesus to death as He regarded it, namely as the climax of His Divine mission, an actual event in history which finished the work which the Father had given Him to do. There can be no doubt that Jesus regarded any human decision made in His presence either while He lived or when He died, as a decision made in the presence of God, for which we are responsible to God. If, as the Evangelist says in *v.* 16, God confronts us personally with His own love in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus, something more is required than intellectual deliberation. We are called to make a moral decision. The Evangelist puts this in a very striking way. 19-21 *He that doeth truth cometh to the light,* and an evildoer *hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his works should be reproved.* The *light that lighteth every man* may reveal moral obliquity as the cause of unbelief. This description of the believer as one who *doeth the truth* will be best understood if we consider more fully the Evangelist's governing conception of Jesus as ' the Truth '.

TRUTH

In the Greek version of the Old Testament the word *alētheia* (='truth') is used to translate the Hebrew word *ĕmĕth* in by far the majority of cases. The fundamental meaning of *ĕmĕth* is 'trustworthiness', what is sure and deserving of confidence. As applied to God, it denotes the fundamental principles of His being, and is seen in all that He says or does (Ps. xxv. 10). Not only His fidelity to promises is meant, but His constant goodness. This Divine truth demands a similar quality in men. The true worshipper is he who speaks 'truth in his heart' (Pss. xv. 2; li. 6). *Truth* demands a right and just relationship between man and man. Ezekiel speaks of one who hath 'executed true judgment between man and man, hath walked in my statutes and kept my judgments to deal truly' (xviii. 8f.). As in the Johannine conception *Truth* is not merely something to be believed, but also something to be done (iii. 21). The absence of this righteous dealing on man's side is due to the absence of a 'knowledge of God' (Hosea iv. 1). *Ĕmĕth* means the trustworthiness or 'faithfulness' of God (Exod. xxxiv. 6; Deut. vii. 9). *Ĕmĕth* distinguishes God from all other gods, and constitutes a moving and central element in the deepest Hebrew faith. 'Thou art *the* God, thy words are truth' (2 Sam. vii. 28).

When we pass to the Greek conception of *alētheia* we find that its fundamental meaning is the real as against the unreal; that which is actually there and that which only seems to be there, the true as opposed to the false. In Plato the upper world of truth is opposed to the lower world of sense (*Rep.* vi. 508; *Phaedrus* 247). To reach this upper world of truth is the goal of all human striving. It was from this world of truth that the soul had originally come. There it essentially belongs, but it fell away and came to inhabit a material body. *Truth* is regarded not merely as waiting to be discovered and discerned, but as a power working in the mind of man.

This Platonic conception of *Truth* underlies all Hellenistic religious thinking, and influenced even Jewish thought. This influence is seen most clearly in Philo. In Philo, *Truth* stands in opposition to falsehood and myth. *Truth* is an active power, 'strips off all the coverings of such things as are concealed, on the one side, revealing virtue to our eyes, and on the other side, in its turn, uncovering vice' (*De Ebrietate* 6; Yonge I. 454). Truth is akin to Light (cf. John i. 9; iii. 19), 'keeping my conscience clear as in the light of the sun and of the day' (*De Josepho* 68; Yonge II. 468). *Truth* is self-revealing as 'Light' is. The

'gnosis' or 'knowledge' of the Hellenistic religion is truth in action, a divine power by which a man is reborn and becomes a partaker in the world of *alētheia*. The translators of the Old Testament into Greek must have been fully aware that in rendering *ĕmĕth* by *alētheia*, the Greek conception would influence the minds of their readers.

In the Johannine writings the Greek conception of *Truth* as ultimate reality, is fused with the Hebrew idea of *ĕmĕth*. Even in Paul's thought we find the influence of the Greek conception. He says that the pagan 'exchanged the truth of God for a lie' (Rom. i. 25). He means that he worshipped a false conception of God as depicted in an idol, rather than God as He really is and has revealed Himself to men. The same contrast is made in 1 John v. 21. Jesus is Himself called the 'Truth' (xiv. 6), and is King of the 'Kingdom of truth' (xviii. 37). God Himself is witnessing to the *Truth* in the person and work of Jesus on earth (v. 32). The Spirit is the 'Spirit of truth' (xv. 26) which leads believers into 'all the truth' (xvi. 13). It is to be noted that the last quotation is an echo of the prayer in Ps. xxv. 5, 'Lead me into thy truth' (so rendered in the Septuagint version). The Hebrew should really be translated, 'lead me to walk in thy faithfulness'. In all the occurrences of the word in the Johannine writings, however, the Hebrew idea is the governing one. The Spirit that leads into all the truth is the Spirit that makes communion with 'the only true God' possible, a communion which is 'life eternal' (xvii. 3). The Evangelist could not have penned 'full of grace and truth' (i. 14), without reference in his mind to the psalmist's 'plenteous in mercy and truth' (Ps. lxxxvi. 15). (Cf. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks*, pp. 70ff.)

In the interpretation of the Johannine term, it should be remembered that in his usage, *Truth* is not ultimately to be explained either from Jewish or Hellenistic sources. The Evangelist writes out of an experience of Christ which gave him creative power to utter his meaning by the free use of whatever existing forms of religious thought were at his disposal. He is free to substitute 'sin' as the opposite of *truth*, instead of the usual Greek opposite, 'falsehood' (pp. 67ff.). In viii. 45 the 'sin' which Jesus disclaims is the sin of speaking words falsely uttered as God's words. At the same time, whatever echoes there may be of Stoic thought (pp. 52ff.), in viii. 32, the *Truth* makes men free, not of ignorance in the Greek sense, but of culpable blindness to the revelation of God's nature and purpose in Christ which is 'sin'. The Evangelist can speak of 'he that doeth sin' as the opposite of 'he that doeth truth' (viii. 34).

In the whole Johannine conception of truth there appears the influence of the governing conception of Christ's person stated

in i. 51. Jesus is the Truth and reveals it because He actually inhabits both the upper world of truth or reality and the lower world of sense or 'flesh'. Pilate asks impatiently, 'What is truth?' The answer is He who stands before him as a prisoner, but his eyes are blinded so that he cannot see.

21 In the light of this estimate of the meaning of Truth in this gospel, what is the meaning of the phrase *to do the truth?* (1) It is to aim at reality, in the first place as regards ourselves. We must think of ourselves as we really are, if all secrets were known. Some secrets of men's hearts are never known except in the 'light that lighteth every man'. *He that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God. 'In God'* is a brief pregnant phrase which is partially expressed by 'in the sight of God', but also includes the idea of seeking to do not our own will, but the will of God. The 'aiming at reality' is, first of all, to be more anxious as to what God thinks and demands of us, than what we think of God and what our 'ideals' are. What God thinks and demands is revealed in Jesus Christ. Thus 'to do the truth' means a willingness to undergo the piercing moral scrutiny of Jesus, and to direct our lives accordingly. What keeps men back is not only the fear of discovery and punishment, but a shrinking from the appearance we present in the light of the presence of Jesus, and the moral demand made of us. Concealment and compromise are characteristic of all imperfect living.[1] Zacchaeus desired 'to see Jesus'. Jesus then looked on Zacchaeus, and in that silent scrutiny as Jesus walked home with him, Zacchaeus saw as he never saw before that his manner of life was wrong and must be changed (Luke xix. 1ff.). 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us' (1 John i. 8). If Jesus is the Truth, to come into the light of His presence and to listen to His moral requirements, is to discover that we are not baffled idealists, but sinners against God. 'A sense of sin is a rather advanced stage in our moral and spiritual experience. There are those who keep on deploring that the modern age suffers from a defective sense of sin But that is putting the cart

[1] Cf. W. Temple, *Readings in St. John's Gospel*, p. 52.

before the horse. Its essential need is a living sense of God. . . . You may feel remorse or shame or desperation; you may feel you have forfeited your self-respect, failed your friends, or let down a cause; but you cannot experience a sense of sinfulness without some vital experience of God.'[1]

(2) We must also aim at reality, 'do the truth', in respect of our thinking about Jesus Himself. Many who think they cannot believe to-day, have never really had Jesus, as He really is, presented to them. They try to think of Him through a mist of abstract theological doctrine, or ecclesiastical prejudice, or outworn theories of the inspiration of the Bible, or the musty atmosphere of a lifeless Church. *To do the truth* in our relation to Jesus Christ involves sincere and fearless thought and study, especially of the Gospels, undertaken reverently, prayerfully, and under competent guidance. Only then will His words and example, appreciated in their original historical setting, become forces that operate on mind, conscience and will. He 'speaks to our condition', in the language of an older phraseology. It is also of infinite importance that we should not merely study the Gospels, but should study the effect of missionary teaching and preaching in other lands where men of other races are coming to the light, rejoicing in the light for the first time; where a Church is in being and growing, all the time confronted with persecution or death, or in the midst of war.[2] The historical Jesus is the Jesus of all history since His coming. The Church is the 'body' of a living Christ. The *Truth* as it appears in the Gospels or in the Church in these modern tragic situations, it is not enough merely to ponder. The *Truth* they reveal is one about which something must be done, and done by us. How much unbelief, if we are to be honest with ourselves, is due not to mental perplexity in the first place, but to a clear and deliberate moral judgment we have made about ourselves! We feel the tremendous demand He makes on our lives, a shattering sense of the needs and rights of others interpreted by Him, and of the faith and sacrifice asked of us as Christians. We do not need to be bad people, as the world

[1] F. R. Barry, *The Relevance of Christianity*, p. 190.
[2] Read *To-day in Manchuria*, by T. Ralph Morton.

counts bad, to understand what the Evangelist means by verses 20, 21.

22-30 See pp. 109ff. The sudden re-introduction of a Baptist story here is strange. All attempts to find a more appropriate place for it in the Gospel are unsatisfying.

24 *John was not yet cast into prison.* The words are meant to show that the two ministries went on side by side. Jesus did not take up the torch which fell from the hands of the imprisoned prophet (cf. v. 35).

25-30 The 'Jew' (R.V.) had suggested that Jesus' ministry was more popular and effective than John's. Jealousy is aroused among the Baptist's disciples. If that be so, the Baptist's answer shows a very noble mind.

The succeeding verses are a comment and reflection of the Evangelist, loosely connected with what precedes. 31 *He that is of the earth is of the earth and of the earth he speaketh* refers to the Baptist. The words are not derogatory. They mean that his mission was meant to prepare the way on earth for the coming of *Him that cometh from heaven*, and who, sent by God, alone reveals the ultimate secret of God. 33 Jesus brings the 'truth', a Divine revelation of love (iii. 16). To Him John directs his disciples (i. 29). 34 The Baptist's inspiration is not denied. Yet the Spirit comes and goes in the earthly prophet. On Jesus it 'abides' (i. 32). God *giveth not the Spirit by measure* (to Jesus). The *Spirit* is God's gift to men (the spirit of 'sonship', Rom. viii. 15). 35 It comes to men through Jesus Christ (i 12), who had always an abiding and unique consciousness of Sonship. *The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into his hand.* The emphasis is on *hath given* rather than *all things.* The dependence of Jesus on God for all that He said and did is a characteristic note of the Johannine thought. *All things* means all that is needed in order to bring men into a filial relationship to the Father (cf. Matt. xi. 27).[1]

36 *The wrath of God abideth on him.* 'A sentimental and hedonist generation tries to eliminate "wrath" from its conception of God. Of course if "anger" and "wrath" are taken to mean the emotional reaction of an irritated self-concern,

[1] See further, pp. 169f.

there is no such thing in God' (Temple). It is best to translate *orgē* by 'wrath' rather than 'anger'. It is also insufficient and misleading to attempt to say that the wrath of God 'is not an arbitrary sentence, but the working out of a moral law' (Westcott). This tends to make us think that moral laws are forces which come automatically into operation when men do wrong, or cherish wrong aims. Paul's description of the moral condition of the pagan world without the knowledge of God as Christ revealed Him is given in Rom. i. 18-32. He calls that moral condition the 'wrath of God'. The New Testament writers do not think or speak in terms of 'moral law', or a 'moral order'. They think in much more personal terms of the nature and consequences of wrong-doing. What we call the 'moral order' is to them the sphere in which the holy, living, personal God acts and governs. God is not thought of as handing over the wrong-doer to an impersonal blind force which automatically punishes. The 'wrath of God' is an expression of God's holy personality. It is the only way in which we would expect God to act towards those who by unclean or selfish action set themselves in antagonism to His holy and sovereign will, and 'do not the truth' (p. 143). Just because sin in the New Testament is regarded as a human personal activity directed against the personal activity of God, who is working out His purpose for the world, the 'wrath of God' does not mean that God has ceased to have any personal relationship with the sinner and becomes like a judge on the bench instead, whose main purpose is to administer the law. God is in control of what we call the moral order. He never ceases to have a Father's concern over His rebellious children. 'They know not what they do.' His wrath is His means of showing both that concern and His unswerving purpose. It is a means of chastisement and of enlightening those who are ignorant of the true significance of 'what they do' in ignoring God's loving will. Anything else would mean that men were mere insects in His sight, to be brushed aside if they became inconvenient or disagreeable. It would mean that nothing that any of us do, good or ill, matters very much to God, and, on the whole, that God likes good people best. To be treated as one who is a rebel, having the power to rebel as a con-

stituent of our nature, and equally as one with the power of coming to know that we are rebels against the holy, unalterable love of God, is an infinitely nobler condition than to be regarded merely as beings who deserved to be crushed if they do not do what they are told.[1] *The wrath of God abideth on him*, but the same man is not excluded from the promise *we will come unto him and make our abode with him* (xiv. 23). The field where the 'wrath' of God operates is also the field where the Gospel is preached. The wrath of God in the New Testament teaching does not provoke resentment against God, but teaches men to hate themselves, which, as Pascal says, is a distinctive mark of Christianity.[2]

(2) *The Samaritan Woman.* iv. 1-42. 'The Water of Life.'
Introduction, vv. 1-6.

1 *The Lord knew.* This title for Jesus occurs in this Gospel in vi. 23; xi. 2; xx. 2, 28; xxi. 7. It is the name under which the risen and exalted Christ was worshipped in the Early Church (Acts ii. 36). This use of the title should be distinguished from its use in the vocative case, as a title of reverence applied to Jesus on earth. In *v.* 11 the Samaritan woman addresses Jesus as 'Sir', where the Greek word is the same as in *v.* 1, but she is not giving Him the Christian title. The priests address Pilate as 'Sir', the same word (Matt. xxvii. 63). Compare the address of Martha and Mary (xi. 21, 32). In xx. 28, however, Thomas gives Jesus the full Christian title, *my Lord and my God.* A study of Phil. ii. 5-11 will shed much light on the full Christian meaning of 'Lord'.

2 *Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,* is a rather strange parenthesis. It is an apparent contradiction of iii. 22, 26. The real meaning seems to be that while Jesus sanctioned Christian Baptism, in His lifetime He baptized only through His disciples. The words may be intended as a justification of baptism as practised in the early Church.

(There is some reason to think that *vv.* 1 and 2 have undergone some editorial change, or may be entirely an editorial

[1] Cf. A. E. Taylor, *The Faith of a Moralist*, I, pp. 189f.
[2] *Pensées* (Brunschvicg), 468; cf. C. S. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, pp. 45f.

addition. The occurrence both of 'the Lord' and 'Jesus' in *v.* 1 is strange and grammatically awkward. Verse 3 provides a geographical connecting link with iii. 22.[1])

5 *Sychar:* generally identified now with Askar, at the foot of Mount Ebal, about half a mile north of Jacob's well.[2]

6 *Wearied with his journey.* The words are, along with those of xi. 35, xix. 28, a clear indication that the Evangelist, with all his emphasis on the Divine personality of Jesus, regards Him as truly man. *Thus*='as He was'. 'What meaneth "thus"? Not on a throne, not on a cushion, but simply, as He was, on the ground' (Chrysostom).

The sixth hour. The Jews began the twenty-four hours at 6 p.m. Night extended from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Thus the time would be 12 noon. (See Westcott's *Commentary*, p. 282.)

The whole story is so told as to imply that the contrast between the Samaritan woman's and the Jews' reception of Jesus is marked. *Art thou greater than our father Jacob?* (*vv.* 12ff.) is followed by desire for *living water. Art thou greater than our father Abraham?* (viii. 53ff.) is a hostile challenge, and is followed by an attempt to stone Jesus. The Samaritans are represented as much more ready than the Jews to forsake the traditional religion. It is interesting to note that Luke's Gospel (e.g. the story of the Ten Lepers, and the Parable of the Good Samaritan) also sets Samaritans in favourable contrast with the Jews. The Samaritan woman is here introduced as the nearest representative of the world outside Jewry, and of a race that had an hereditary antagonism against the Jews. The Evangelist may also intend to correct an impression within the Christian Church, that Samaria was never evangelized by Jesus. Luke ix. 51-56 shows the intensity of the antagonism in the hearts even of His disciples. In the Lucan passage, Jesus is not turned aside by a Samaritan rejection of Him, but 'they went to another village'. Similarly, He is not turned aside by this woman's prejudice against Jews (*v.* 9). In the story of the Samaritan woman, we have the same marvellous, silent patience, and power of waiting for results, as Luke depicts in the pregnant

[1] Cf. p. 182. [2] Smith *HGHL*, p. 371.

words, 'they went to another village'. Has the Fourth Evangelist had access to some story connected with the visit to that other Samaritan village? The Johannine story is the story of the death of a stubborn national prejudice, and a Samaritan woman appears as one of the first Christian Evangelists to her own people (*vv.* 28-30). How fierce that prejudice was, also appears in viii. 48, where Jesus is tauntingly called a 'Samaritan', and His sympathy with them is regarded as born of the devil.

A brief account of the main characteristics of the Samaritan religion may be found useful in the interpretation of the story.

(1) One main subject of controversy was whether the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim or the temple in Jerusalem was erected on the site 'which God had chosen to put his name there' (Deut. xii. 5). Deut. xxvii. 4 was cited. There our Hebrew text reads 'Mount Ebal'. The Samaritans claimed that 'Mount Gerizim' was the true reading. These are the twin mountains of Samaria. The mere fact that there was a sanctuary on Gerizim was no occasion for controversy. The bitterness developed when Judaism claimed religious supremacy for Zion, in accordance with Deut. xii. 5. The bitterness of the quarrel extended to the Diaspora Jews as Ecclesiasticus l. 25f. shows.

(2) The Samaritans accepted only the Pentateuch as Torah, but upon it, from about 200 B.C., there had been reared certain mystical doctrines which are not unlike orthodox rabbinic doctrines of the same kind. Both Jew and Samaritan reverenced the Pentateuch as the authentic revelation of God. Both strove to adapt its teachings to contemporary thought and needs of expanding communal life by scribal interpretation. The Samaritans ultimately rejected the prophetic and other books of the Jewish Scriptures as religiously invalid. They did not, however, reject the idea that true prophets existed (cf. iv. 19). The Samaritan even excelled the Jew in reverence for the authority of the Torah.[1]

(3) The Samaritans held a certain form of Messianic belief. They looked for the coming of a 'Restorer' or *Taheb*, a belief which they based on Deut. xviii. 15, 18. He will be a teacher of righteousness. It should be admitted that the Samaritan docu-

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[1] 'The Jews maintained that Moses wrote down the Law to God's dictation. The Samaritans believed that the Torah was written by the finger of God and then given to Moses to copy.' (E. Robertson, *Judaism and Christianity*, III, p. 74.)

ments which speak of the *Taheb* are later than the date of the Gospel. They may, however, incorporate an earlier belief.

(4) The origin of the Samaritans is disputed. It is held by some that they came into existence at the time of the return under Ezra, but there are strong indications that they existed as a religious community long before the time of Ezra, and claimed to be direct descendants of the Israelite inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom. The bitter controversy is said to have begun when the Samaritans invited the Jews returning from exile to recognize their shrine on Mount Gerizim as the Divinely ordained centre of their common religion. This the Jews refused to do.[1]

The Dialogue. iv. 7-26.

In the interpretation of the Dialogue before us, it is evident that the Evangelist uses the historical facts in his own symbolic way. Much of the narrative is very life-like, but we are often made to feel that the woman appeals to the Evangelist more as the embodiment of Samaritan religion than as an individual. As an interlocutor, the woman ultimately disappears leaving her waterpot behind, and does not return. The story ends with the account of a widespread Christian awakening in Samaria (*vv.* 39-42).

7 *There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water.* A chance meeting, as we would say. Within an environment that could be expected to produce few surprises for her, she encountered the most memorable day of her life. *Give me to drink.* The request is natural and spontaneous, yet the Evangelist soon seizes upon its didactic and symbolic possibilities.

9 The dialogue is introduced by somewhat harsh banter on the woman's part. She seizes the opportunity to tease a thirsty man, who, as she thought, out of sheer need is compelled to cast religious principles to the wind, and break through the enactment that no Jew should take food or drink from a Samaritan. His dress or accent betrays his nationality. Jesus, we know, wore the ' tassel ' that distinguished the pious Jew,

[1] For fuller information regarding Samaritan religion, see Moore *JFC* I, pp. 23-27; H. Odeberg, *The Fourth Gospel*, pp. 180f.; E. Robertson, ' The Samaritans ' in *Judaism and Christianity* III. 69-87. *The Samaritans, their History and Literature*, by M. Gaster, is an authoritative work on this subject.

which was the 'hem' the woman touched in Matt. ix. 20. Here is another kind of touch! It might be said that this woman rather maliciously fastens on the tassel!

Of me, a woman of Samaria; rather 'of me, a woman and a Samaritan'! She emphasizes two things; the fact that He talks to a woman in public (see note on *v.* 27), and that woman a Samaritan. The note of religious inconsistency has been sounded. People like this woman have a habit of emphasizing this. From what we know of her domestic life it must have had a hardening effect on her. She is a jaded and somewhat drab person. Her hold on religion is now slight, whatever it was previously. All she now remembers is that there are inconsistencies and divisions among religious people. She is one of the products of a religious community whose religion was largely nourished on bitter controversy and has failed her, perhaps condemned her, in her hour of need.

10 *The gift of God. Gift* here is a regal word, used of the benefactions of a king, or a rich man. It is always applied to the gift of the Spirit in the Book of Acts. *Who it is.* 'The gift without the giver is bare.' In a very real sense the gift is one that has no value except as identified with the person of the Giver. The gift and the Giver are one, but the appearance of the Giver does not suggest this. If the woman had known, she would have been the suppliant. She is on the edge of a great discovery, and cannot make it. *Living water.* This conception is associated with the Torah in rabbinical writings. The Torah is often called 'the well', an epithet applied also to the spirit that inspired the prophets.[1] The words of Is. lv. 1 were also applied to the Torah. The Law is a 'fountain of life' in Prov. xiii. 14. Zechariah's vision (xiv. 8) speaks of 'living waters' going out from Jerusalem, by which is meant that the blessings of the Law shall penetrate far and wide (cf. Is. xii. 3). In Rev. xxii. 1 'the river of the water of life' proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

11 *Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with,* etc., lit. 'thou hast no bucket'. Probably these words, like the reply of Nicodemus in iii. 4, do not suggest complete density to the spiritual meaning. The following passage from a rabbinical writing

[1] See notes on vii. 37f.

is quoted by Dr. Odeberg (*The Fourth Gospel*, p. 160): 'Rabbi Hanina said: Here is a parable: a well, deep and containing water cool and sweet and good, and no creature was able to drink out of it until there came a man who knotted rope to rope and cord to cord and drew water from it, and then everybody began to draw and drink. So it is with the Torah.'

12 *Art thou greater . . . Jacob.* There is a copious spring in Askar. Why was the woman in the habit of passing it over, preferring Jacob's well, which was at a distance from her home? 'Specially dug for man's use by man, how impressively among the natural streams around does it explain the intensity of the woman's words: *Our father Jacob gave us the well.* Of course it was given, not found. The signs of labour and expense stand out upon it all the more pathetically for the freedom of the waters that come rattling down the vale; and must, one feels, have had their share in increasing the fondness of that tradition which, possibly, was the attraction that drew Jacob's fanatic children to its scanty supplies.'[1] There are two different words (*phrĕar* and *pēgē*), both translated *well*, in the narrative. In *v.* 6 and *v.* 14, the latter word is used, and means 'spring'. In *vv.* 11, 12 the woman used *phrĕar*, which means the masonry or 'pit', constructed with labour and cost, which catches the water of the spring. Jesus uses 'spring' in *v.* 14. A contrast is intended which goes deeper than the natural one between 'spring' and 'pit'. It is between the 'water of life', and the human labour that is spent on conserving it by means of traditional institutions. This woman no doubt shared the traditional feeling of her village that Jacob's workmanship and memorial must be honoured. Perhaps, also, the water was of better quality than any nearer at hand.

13, 14 *Shall never thirst.* Very emphatic; 'shall never thirst, never!' The following words, spoken of Wisdom (which had become another name for Torah), are interesting. 'Come unto me, ye that are desirous of me, and be filled with my produce. . . . Those who eat of me shall still hunger, and those who drink of me shall yet thirst' (Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 18f.). The meaning is that the spiritual resources of

[1] Smith *HGHL*, pp. 373f.

the Torah are inexhaustible, and that those who obtain instruction and guidance in the Torah, always long for more. Jesus offers to satisfy men's hunger and thirst once and for all (cf. Matt. v. 6). That Jesus should thus speak as the Divine Wisdom speaks, indicates a Divine self-consciousness. The words of Matt. xi. 28-30 are also reminiscent of Ecclesiasticus li. 23-28.

The assertion that Jesus leaves no desire unsatisfied must be considered in the light of the fact that there are desires no Christian man should have. Jesus teaches men to examine their desires. He is teaching the world to-day to re-examine those ambitions and principles by which the individual society and international relations are directed. 'To ask us deeply and seriously to reconsider our desires and re-estimate our hopes and ambitions is a most revolutionary demand.'[1] Men are not just bundles of fixed desires, which are to be regarded as integral and unalterable in human nature. 'Thou, O Christ, art all I want' is sometimes interpreted as 'Thou, O Christ, canst give me all I want'. The desire for God is fundamental in human nature, and Christianity moulds this desire in terms of a single dominating desire to know and to do the will of God. It does so, because it teaches that God's whole character, nature, and purpose has been self-revealed in Jesus Christ. The whole presentation of Christ in this Gospel is of One who, in His own person and teaching, brings a heavenly world of Truth into the midst of a world of falsehood and darkness. Men are prevented from entering it because their desires are uncongenial to that world. They 'loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil' (iii. 19). Christ creates new desires. He Himself is the pattern of all good desires. 'I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me' (v. 30). 'In His will is our peace.' (Cf. note on vi. 35.)

In him a well ('spring') *of water springing* ('leaping') *up into eternal life.* These desires of hers, which include her affections and ideals of life, have sprung up only to lose themselves in an empty home and a weary heart. They have now become little more than a general desire to escape troubles

[1] A. D. Lindsay, *The Moral Teaching of Jesus*, p. 55.

of any kind (*v.* 15). Jesus is teaching her to re-make her desires. Her whole attitude breathes satiety and disappointment which He was quick to perceive beneath the jaunty and sarcastic way in which she 'tossed the ball' back to Him at the outset (*v.* 9). He promises her now, even though she does not yet grasp His full meaning, a new inexhaustible spring within of energy, power, hope, and love. These waters do not fall back to earth and disappear, like the water of a desert spring. They spring up into 'eternal life', a kind of life that lasts, and will provide ample supplies which she may, as she does later, share with others. What a picture it is of the possibilities of a human heart that, at the moment, is more like a frozen pool!

16 *Go, call thy husband.* A dramatic moment. With unerring divine insight, Jesus penetrates to the actual cause of her state of mind, and of her attitude to religious things (ii. 24, 25). There is a moral complex at the root of these. 17, 18 *Thou hast well said, I have no husband . . . in that saidst thou truly* (lit. 'that was a true word'). The confession is 'true' inasmuch as it acknowledges, without evasion, her own real situation at the moment. 19 *Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.* The woman recognizes that Jesus has been able to penetrate to the innermost secrets of her life (cf. ii. 24, 25). He is a 'seer'.

20 *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain . . . where men ought to worship.* It is remarkable that from this point onwards, no more is said about the woman's domestic situation. The moral issue is disclosed and as suddenly submerged. We would very much have desired to know how Jesus would have dealt with it. The narrative which the Evangelist had before him no doubt told a fuller story of the encounter. Instead, the conversation enters on a monologue regarding a profound religious question—the nature of true worship (*vv.* 21-24). The only further indication that the original conversation took on a much more personal character than is suggested in the narrative is the woman's words in *v.* 29: *Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did*

The sudden transition to the subject of worship is made by the woman herself. Like many another person in a situa-

tion where conscience has been touched, she fastens on the 'unhappy divisions' that separate religious people, and their unholy controversies as an excuse for her own neglect of religion. There is a return of the mood of *v.* 9. Yet from this point, the woman ceases to be a mere individual, and becomes a symbol of that Samaritan community so soon to be brought by her into the Christian Church.

Symbolic interpretation of this portion of the conversation, however, has run riot. The woman's five husbands, it is said, are intended to stand for the five heathen gods mentioned in 2 Kings xvii. 30, 31. The present husband who is no husband is said to be the God of Israel, whom the Samaritans own, but worship in an irregular way. The difficulties raised by such an interpretation are very great. The number of Samaritan deities mentioned in the passage from 2 Kings is seven not five, although Josephus (*Antiquities* ix. 14, 3) gives the number of Samaritan deities as five. It would also be strange if a Jewish writer should think of the worship of strange gods as 'marriage', when Old Testament references to idolatry always represent it as adultery (Jer. iii. 9; Ezek. xxiii. 37). It is also notable that the writer of 2 Kings speaks of the Samaritans as worshipping these deities not successively, but at one and the same time.[1]

21 *The hour cometh* (cf. *v.* 23). In this Gospel the 'hour' is the hour appointed by God, when His final purpose is achieved (p. 233). That hour, in point of time, is the moment of the crucifixion, which is also the 'lifting up' or exaltation of Jesus. Here it means also the beginning of a universal Christian Church. *The hour cometh* when in His person the rival loyalties of Samaria and Jerusalem will be forgotten in a common allegiance to Himself. *Neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father.* The Evangelist is aware that when he wrote, the temple in Jerusalem was in ruins, destroyed by the Romans A.D. 70. The temple on Gerizim was destroyed by Hyrcanus in 129 B.C. The words should also be taken in the light of ii. 19. 22 The words, *Ye worship that which ye know not* are addressed both to Jew and to Samaritan. Jesus speaks in the name of the

[1] Cf. Peake, *Critical Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 205ff.

Christian Church (cf. iii. 11): *We worship that which we know.* In viii. 55 the Jews are accused of not knowing God, a charge which provokes their bitter hostility. In the case of the Samaritan woman, to be told that she does not know God, provokes only a further eagerness to know Him. *For salvation is of the Jews.* In spite of the fact that the Jewish nation is about to reject its Messiah, it is from that nation that the Saviour of the world comes. In addition, Judaism was distinguished from all other contemporary faiths by its doctrine of a living God whose worship demanded righteousness of life. 'The distinctive Jewish doctrine that God is a living God, a God of purpose and judgment, who is perfectly righteous, effected the union of religion and morality which was otherwise foreign to the prevalent cults.'[1]

23-24 *The hour cometh and now is.* The same formula is used in v. 25 to introduce a statement referring to what is not merely imminent, but even now present, in the actual ministry of Jesus. He who created the Church, the universal body of believers, is already at work in this woman's heart, and will soon be at work in her village owing to her missionary zeal (*vv.* 39, 42).

The central thought of *vv.* 23, 24 is contained in the words, *God is a Spirit,* or rather, 'God is Spirit'. We must be careful not to give a purely metaphysical interpretation to these words. They mean that God is not a mere immanent principle in the world He has made, and also that He is not aloof from the affairs of earth or the needs of men. They mean that He is a 'living God'. He is ever active, alive, and purposive. He knows no spatial or temporal limitations, which are characteristic of matter (1 Kings viii. 27). The essential meaning of *God is Spirit* is that God sees, yet cannot be seen or depicted in a material image; God works, but His activity, which is also His presence, cannot be confined to one place (Ps. lxxvii. 13-19). Even *Him whom He hath sent,* in whom men *have seen the Father,* must 'go away', vanish from the outward eyes of men, if His work in the hearts of the disciples, which is also His work in the whole world, is to go on. *It is expedient for you that I go away* (John xvi. 7), in

[1] W. Temple, *Readings in the Fourth Gospel,* p. 64.

order that the *Spirit* may come (cf. xx. 29).

Worship . . . in spirit and in truth. To worship *in spirit* means that we yield our wills to God's will, our thoughts and plans to God's for us and for the world. Spirit must meet with spirit. This oneness of spirit is possible through the gift of *power to become children of God. In truth* means that we are not worshipping an 'image' of God, made out of our own ideas. Idols may be not only metal but mental. Christ alone has introduced us to the real or 'true' God. To worship God *in truth* or in 'reality' makes a great difference to conduct. Worship of a God 'made in our own image', sentimentally and comfortably conceived, affects the nature of the moral demand made on us. *The Father seeketh such to worship him.* Note the word *seeketh.* Christian worship is not merely a human recognition that God is great. 'The human spirit cannot show reverence towards that which is simply great. That which is great must be revealed as having something gracious in it, if the human spirit is to show reverence.'[1] In all the elements of worship—prayer led by priest or minister, Scripture lessons, the use of songs of praise written by saints of old, preaching the Word, the Sacraments—we are not uttering our views about God, or seeking after Him. We are listening to God, responding to God, who is thus actively seeking to be known by us. God thus offers Himself not to *me* alone. Common worship enables men to realize and to proclaim the vastness of His purposes and His love. We are as worshippers asked to open our hearts to God's love for the world, and to surrender our wills to His universal purpose. God quickens our conscience in worship, and feeds our minds with His truth.

25 *I know that Messias cometh, who is called Christ. When he cometh, he will tell us all things.* The woman here speaks as though she were Jewish. Rabbinic documents much later than this Gospel, speak of Messiah as expounding the commandments of the Torah, a kind of glorified Rabbi. These documents, however, may, as often, incorporate earlier beliefs. The main point, however, to note is that instead Jesus reveals Himself to her as a Messiah, who, instead of first seeking to

[1] R. S. Simpson, *Ideas in Corporate Worship*, p. 12.

clear up her religious difficulties, or preaching to her about her moral situation, offers Himself, in sympathy and friendship. 26 *I that speak unto thee am he.* The words are really another form of the invitation 'Come unto me' (cf. pp. 19ff.).

The Missionary Joy of Jesus. vv. 27-38.

27 *They marvelled that he was speaking with a woman* (R.V.). The disciples' surprise at finding their Master talking with a woman is due to ideas of rabbinical propriety. Women were not encouraged to study the Torah. Woman's work is to send her children to be taught in the synagogue, to attend to domestic concerns, and to leave her husband free to study, or if he were a rabbi, to teach in the schools. Social intercourse with women was deprecated. Even too much talk with a man's own wife in the home may encroach on the time that ought to be given to Torah study. *Yet no man said, What seekest thou? or Why talkest thou with her?* The first of these questions is one that might have been expected to be addressed to the woman. The second would have implied criticism of the Master, which would not have been in accordance with the traditional attitude of scholar to rabbi. The silence of the disciples generally, meant that they were witnessing an astoundingly new attitude towards women.

The blot on the rabbinic attitude towards women was that they were discouraged from studying the Torah. Yet study of the Torah was in the eyes of the rabbi the highest and best religious privilege in the world. Such discouragement meant that women were regarded as inferior to men in mind, in function and status. Some women evidently were students of the Law, but they were frowned upon. Salvation for the man depended on his knowledge of and ability to perform the enactments of the Law, under the guidance of the scribe. Women need not and were not regarded as able to fulfil them all. Their salvation was obtained on easier terms. Women, slaves, and children were mentioned together,[1] as they are still in the Jewish Prayer-book, where the blessing is included, 'Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, that thou hast not made

[1] Mishnah, *Aboth* i. 5, 6 (Danby).

me a woman.' This inferior religious status accorded to women in the sight of God persisted alongside a deep reverence for wife and mother.[1]

Jesus' treatment of women bore fruit in the apostolic Church. In Corinth women became so interested in the expositions and teaching at the Christian services that they openly asked questions. Paul suggests that these had better be asked at home. He did not succeed in emancipating his mind from rabbinical tradition in all feminine matters, but he at least recognized that women's powers of thought had an important contribution to make in the life of the Church. When he forbids women to speak in Church, he is only trying to prevent worship from 'being turned into a discussion group'[2] (1 Cor. xiv. 33-36).

28 *Left her waterpot.* Has she forgotten her object in coming to the well? Or did she leave her waterpot because she meant to come back? 'You cannot allegorize that waterpot. It is a perfectly empty waterpot. No one ever found the old Law at the bottom of it' (Scott Holland).[3] 29 *Hath told me all things that ever I did.* These words seem to show that in the narrative as the Evangelist received it, there must have been more detailed information about the story of this woman's life.

31-34 The conversation with the disciples is meant to suggest the missionary joy in the heart of Jesus. Through His talk with this woman, the 'living water' is reaching a whole Samaritan village. The disciples offer Him food, but His weariness and hunger have been forgotten in absorption in His vocation and in the satisfying of this woman's need Verse 34 is a complete description of the mission and message of Jesus, as it is related in this Gospel. *To finish his work:* literally 'to bring to a final end' (cf. xvii. 4, and the final word on the Cross, xix. 30). The Kingdom or 'reign' of God has with His coming and going again to the Father by the way

[1] See pp. xviif. of *A Rabbinic Anthology* (Montefiore and Loewe). The late C. G. Montefiore there presents a balanced and at times trenchant criticism of the rabbinic attitude towards women.

[2] J. Moffatt, *1 Corinthians.*

[3] Quoted by W. Temple, *Readings in St. John's Gospel.*

of suffering and death, once for all been inaugurated among men (cf. xiii. 3).

35-38 The saying referred to in *v.* 35 is some proverbial expression, meaning that the corn is still in the blade, and there is yet four months till harvest comes. It is a proverb recommending delay as against untimely haste. Jesus, however, lifts up His eyes and sees the Samaritans already coming towards Him, notwithstanding that the good seed had only just been sown by the well-side.

Verses 35-38 are a typical Johannine passage. The immediate historical situation is forgotten, and Jesus is speaking to the Church as it was in the Evangelist's day. In *v.* 38, those who are addressed may well be the earliest preachers of the Gospel, already engaged in their mission. They need stimulus and encouragement. It is emphasized that Jesus sees in the response of the Samaritan villagers not only seed-time but harvest. In *v.* 36 we must not too closely seek to discover who is meant by 'he that soweth' and 'he that reapeth'. The words are probably an expansion of the prophetic saying, referring to the coming 'Day of the Lord', 'the plowman shall overtake the reaper' (Amos ix. 13 and context). In the prophetic pictures of the good time coming when God has fulfilled His purpose, all sorts of non-natural happenings will take place (e.g. Isaiah xi. 6-8).[1] These are here spiritualized. The life and mission of Jesus being the fulfilment of God's final purpose, is both seed-time and harvest (cf. 1 John v. 20). The proverbial saying in *v.* 37, in its original use, was probably cynical and despairing in tone (cf. Job xxxi. 8). It is the complaint of the worker who knows that others will reap what he has sown, and that he himself will not see results. Jesus says that the saying is 'true'; i.e. it corresponds to God's purpose. It belongs to the world of Truth, where no service and sacrifice is forgotten. This world is not merely directed and guided by those of us who happen to be alive. We inherit not only the sins of the dead, but their faith and sacrifice also as a spiritual heritage. It is ours to bear the one without murmuring as our opportunity, and to thank God for the other.

39-42 In these verses it is once again emphasized that

[1] Cf. p. 13; see Dodd, *Parables of the Kingdom*, pp. 186f.

the Samaritans receive Jesus, and ask Him to remain with them. The obvious and intended contrast is with the Jews who rejected Him (p. 148). The words in *v.* 42, *This is indeed the Saviour of the world* (R.V.) show that the Samaritans do not interpret the person and mission of Jesus by their own traditional Messianic hopes, but are convinced that what He has brought to them is meant for all. The old time bitter controversy between Jew and Samaritan is magnificently superseded. Such things have happened particularly in the Church of the mission field, and also at home, where denominational differences have disappeared or have been transcended in face of the world's need and the Church's task.[1]

43-45 Verses 43-45 contain a short itinerary leading up to the Healing of the Nobleman's son. *A prophet hath no honour in his own country* (*v.* 44; cf. Matt. xiii. 57; Mark vi. 4; Luke iv. 24). The use of the saying here presents difficulty. Does the Evangelist regard Judea and not Galilee, as the native country of Jesus? Yet elsewhere the Evangelist speaks of Nazareth as Jesus' birthplace (i. 46; xix. 19). Galilee is spoken of as the place of His origin (vii. 52). No explanation is completely satisfactory. It is, however, interesting to note that in iv. 3 Jesus is represented as going to Galilee in order to escape an unwelcome rivalry with the Baptist, whose disciples were less numerous than His (cf. Mark vii. 24). Here Jesus is represented as going to His own country, because He 'has no honour' there. This explanation, however, seems to be contradicted in *v.* 45. May it not be that *his own country* means Palestine, in contrast to Samaria, and that the reference is to what has just happened in Samaria, as against His constant rejection by His own countrymen, the Jews in general? The Galilean popularity is not securely founded, and of the same class as that recorded in ii. 23-25, where men *receive Him* on the ground of the signs He wrought in Jerusalem.

[1] It should also be noted that the title 'Saviour of the world' was in the Hellenistic world given to various deities in the Mystery-religions, and in magical documents. In connexion with the Emperor-cult, it was also given to many of the Roman Emperors (Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, third edition, p. 369). As applied to Christ, it appears in the New Testament only here and in 1 John iv. 14. In 1 Tim. ii. 3f.; iv. 10, 'Saviour' appears as a title of God. 'Saviour' is a frequent title of God in the Old Testament. The highest attribute ascribed to God and the proudest title of the potentates of that ancient world, belongs to Christ alone.

(3) *The Nobleman of Capernaum.* iv. 46-54.

Here is introduced a type of the Gentile convert.

46 *Nobleman:* rather a 'courtier'; attached to the court of Herod Antipas and in his employment. In what capacity we are not told. He would be a Gentile. The story is another form of the narrative in Matt. viii. 5-13; Luke vii. 1-10. If the Evangelist had known the Synoptic form of the story, is it likely that he would have made no use of the saying 'I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel'? The saying would be congenial to a writer who sharply contrasts the reception by the Samaritans with the continual rejection of Jesus by the Jews, and describes the coming of the Greeks and their reception by Jesus (xii. 20ff.). There are also certain discrepancies which, if they are changes made by the Evangelist in the Synoptic story, are rather pointless. Here the sickness is 'fever'; in Matthew he is a 'paralytic'. In John he is a 'courtier'; in Matthew and Luke he is a 'centurion'. Moreover in Matthew and Luke Jesus offers to go down, but is asked only to 'speak the word'. In John, the suggestion made by the courtier that he should go to the patient's bedside, is rebuked, and Jesus 'speaks the word' without being asked.

47 *Come down.* The road from Cana to Capernaum is a descent to the lake-side—an indication of exactness in the traditional story which the Evangelist uses.

48 *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe:* a very strange utterance, especially if the Evangelist has before him the Synoptic record of the man's humility. The utterance is also perplexing, in view of the fact that this Gospel records various 'signs' as manifestations of Christ's glory. Yet here, as elsewhere in the Gospel, faith based only on the sight of miracles, is depreciated (cf. ii. 23; iv. 45). In vi. 30 the crowd asks for a 'sign', which is remarkable inasmuch as a great miracle has just been wrought. Evidently the miracle was not to them a sign *in the true sense.* In vi. 26, the crowd is rebuked because they saw in the miracle only the satisfaction of their hunger. A true sign is one that reveals to the recipient the person or 'glory' of Christ as the Giver of the spiritual bread. Here, however, in this story of the noble-

man, it is the healing at a distance by Christ's spoken word alone and the father's belief in its power, that becomes a true 'sign'. The word of Jesus is the Divine creative 'Word' or 'Logos' (pp. 90f.).

51-53 The form in which this story is cast by the Fourth Evangelist, recalls an interesting parallel in contemporary rabbinic literature. Rabbis were credited with the power of working miracles of healing by means of prayer. It is related of Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa (*c.* A.D. 70) that messengers were sent to ask him to heal the sick son of Rabbi Gamaliel, Paul's teacher. Hanina went to his upper room (cf. Acts. i. 13) and interceded with God on behalf of the sick child. 'When he came down, he said to them, "Go, the fever has left him." Then they said to him, "Art thou then a prophet?" (i.e. "Have you second sight?"). Then he replied, "I am no prophet (or 'seer') nor the son of a prophet. It has been revealed to me that when my prayer comes easily from my mouth, then I know that it has been answered. If it does not, I know that it is rejected." Accordingly the messengers sat down and noted in writing the exact time. When they arrived at Rabbi Gamaliel's house, he said to them, "By the Temple Service, you have made absolutely no mistake about the time. At that hour exactly the fever left him and he asked us to give him something to drink." '[1]

The resemblances in literary form to iv. 51f. are obvious. The difference in emphasis in the rest of the story is equally obvious. In the popular story, the emphasis is laid on the wonder-working power of Rabbi Hanina. He knows by a special sign from heaven when his prayers are answered and when they are not. He can confidently tell the messengers that the boy is healed in response to his prayer. The very hour is confirmed by the father, and we are left with the impression that, in the popular story, Gamaliel is meant to marvel at the power given to a rival rabbi, rather than depicted as one whose faith in God is strengthened by the recovery of his son (cf. 'And he believed and his whole house', *v.* 53). It should be said that the rabbinical writings contain many

[1] Fiebig, *Judische Wundergeschichten*, p. 20; Mishnah (Danby's Trans.), *Berakoth* v. 5.

warnings to rabbis against lack of humility,[1] and also that such stories as the one I have quoted are recorded by fervent admirers! The important point to note is that the depreciation of a faith that rests on 'signs and wonders' may be a reference to the popular attitude towards one rabbi or another (cf. Matt. xxiii. 7f.). The 'greatest' would be the rabbi who could authenticate his teaching with confirmatory miracles.[2] There is, of course, no question here of dependence on the part of the Fourth Evangelist on the rabbinic story. Both stories spring from the same milieu of religious thinking, and if there is any reference on the part of the Evangelist to similar rabbinic stories, it is in the direction of suggesting, as in *v.* 48, that Jesus cannot be classed with ordinary wonder-workers, whose miracles are used merely in order to authenticate themselves or their teaching.[3]

This story, along with the story of the healing of the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter, and the story of the centurion's servant in Matthew and Luke, are the only ones in the Gospels where the healing is effected at a distance. In both cases, the recipients are Gentiles. Were these stories of some peculiar value to the early Church in its approach to the Gentile world? Did Gentiles tend to demand that the religious preacher should authenticate his message by an external sign in proof that Divine power is present?[4] The conception of a Deity who gave no visible signs of His active intervention in human affairs, and did not produce 'wonders' for the benefit and assurance of His worshippers at the hands of His servants, would be difficult for a pagan to grasp. That the God of the Christians should manifest Himself in a person called Jesus, who could not Himself escape a shameful and painful death, and was concerned as manifesting His supreme

[1] Montefiore, *Commentary on Synoptic Gospels* ii. 556.

[2] It should also be said that in rabbinic writings the conception appears that faith without miracles is superior to faith based on them. (Loewe, *Rabbinic Anthology*, p. 692.)

[3] The relationship of faith in Jesus, which comes to expression as the principal characteristic of the Gospel miracles, is a unique element, as compared with contemporary miracle-stories. Cf. Vincent Taylor, *Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, pp. 131ff. His whole chapter on 'Miracle-Stories' should be consulted.

[4] The narrative of Acts contains many encounters of the Christian preachers with sorcery and magic, e.g. viii. 9ff.; xiii. 8ff.

power in the preaching of the 'word', and in spiritual change, must have prejudiced the apostolic message in the eyes of many a Gentile. Are these two stories of healing at a distance specially valuable to the Christian preacher in his work, inasmuch as they show how Gentiles may be brought into the Church by the 'word' and without the need for those signs of the power of Jesus to heal which were given to Jews, and are described in many a healing story in the Synoptic Gospels? Underlying the words of *v.* 48 (note the sudden transition to 'ye', apparently addressed to an individual) there may be a rejection of the idea that Christian preachers must always authenticate their message with a sign.[1]

Note the emphasis on the immediate power of the 'word' of Jesus in *vv.* 52f. As though we were reading a story in the Acts of the Apostles, we are told that the nobleman *himself believed and his whole house*, which may be an indication that the Evangelist has the growth of the Church in mind.

We have now finished the Evangelist's study of the various types of Christian believer. In the next section we encounter the attitude of the Jewish nation as a whole—the more public ministry, which is assumed in the Nicodemus story, and the healing of the Nobleman's son. Both these have already heard of Jesus' ministry. We enter on the great conflict between belief and unbelief. Individuals, like the man at Bethesda (v) or the man born blind (ix) still appear, but their story is only an introduction to public controversy with the religious authorities.

[1] Cf. A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, p. 99. I am largely indebted to Dr. Rawlinson throughout this paragraph.

III. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD. v-xii.

1. The Divinity of Jesus. v. 1-47 (including vii. 15-24).

In this chapter we have for the first time a discourse of Jesus, which is also a controversy with the authorities. It inaugurates the story of a general conflict between faith and unbelief. The conflict is developed under a series of topics, all of which were also living questions of the Evangelist's own day. In v. 1-47, the Evangelist's primary purpose is not to give an account of a miracle of healing, vividly as that is described, but to display it as the occasion for a controversy which centres around the Divine claims of Jesus.

The Healing at Bethesda. vv. 1-16.

1 Jesus' presence in Jerusalem is accounted for by a visit to one of the great Feasts.

2 *There is in Jerusalem.* Note the present tense. When the Gospel was written, Jerusalem was in ruins. Is the Evangelist making use of a traditional story? On the question of the identification of Bethesda and Siloam (cf. ix. 7) see G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem* II, pp. 566f. The meaning of 'Bethesda' is uncertain.

3, 4 Note that part of *v.* 3 and the whole of *v.* 4 are omitted in the R.V. The words are undoubtedly, according to the best manuscript authority, a gloss, which was written on the margin by a scribe and later transferred to the text. They describe a popular account of the action of what must have been an intermittent spring, regarded as having medicinal properties (*v.* 7).

5, 6 *Wouldst thou be made whole?* Jesus selects the most hopeless case of all. An illness lasting so long and the absence of anyone to take him to the healing waters must have killed even desire to get well. Jesus can resurrect a dead desire and can create new ones (cf. p. 153).

7 The man was within a few feet of what he believed would heal him, and yet unable to cross the small distance for want of a friendly hand. It is possible that the man himself held some such belief about the spring as is recorded in *vv.* 3f.

To the modern reader, the picture of a man unable to reach the healing waters for lack of friends arrests the attention. Have we not known those who feel themselves unable to accept the Christian faith because no one is able to bring convincing proof that it is true? To such a man appears the Great Healer himself.

> That with this bright believing band,
> I have no claim to be
> That faiths by which my comrades stand
> Seem fantasies to me,
> And mirage-mists their Shining Land
> Is a strange destiny.[1]

9 *On the same day was the Sabbath.* Among the multifarious regulations laid down for conduct on the Sabbath, much is said about the kind of work that was lawful on that day.[2] It was allowed that a bed with a living man upon it should be carried, but it was unlawful to carry a bed by itself.
10, 11 The answer, *He that made me whole . . . Take up thy bed and walk,* implies that the friends who had carried him to the pool were not breaking the Law, and also that One who had the power to heal him, also had authority to authorize a breach of the Law. We are reminded of the saying, 'The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath' (Mark ii. 28).
13 *And he that was healed wist not who it was.* 'Christianity founds hospitals, and atheists are cured in them, never knowing that they owe their cure to Christ. Prisons are reformed under the influence which flows from the Gospel; and the prisoners never know—sometimes the reformers themselves do not know—that Christ is the Author.'[3]

The Divinity of Jesus. vv. 17-29.
17 *My Father worketh even until now, and I work* (R.V.).

[1] *The Impercipient* by T. Hardy. [2] Mishnah, *Shabbath* 7, 2.
[3] W. Temple, *Readings in St. John's Gospel*, p. 109.

This is a profound saying, and is really the theme of all the succeeding discourse. (See note on *v.* 19.) 18 *The Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the Sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God.* When a Jewish son refused to obey his father, he was sometimes said to 'make himself equal with his father', i.e. equal in authority. Jesus is blamed both for rejecting the authority of God who has laid down the rules for the observance of the Sabbath in the Torah, and also for blasphemously assuming a relationship to the Torah not different from that of God Himself.

19 *The Son can do nothing of himself . . . the Son also doeth in like manner.* These words are really an interpretation of *v.* 17. His Jewish opponents at first fastened upon the man's carrying his bed on the Sabbath, as a breach of Divine law.[1] They soon came to know that not only his ability to carry his bed and walk was due to his having been healed by Jesus, but that the command to do so came also from Him. The reply of Jesus has in view also an unexpressed criticism of Himself for *healing* on the Sabbath day. The Law permitted that anyone whose life was in danger might call in the doctor. This man's case could not be so described. Jesus' defence of Himself recalls a favourite subject of speculation in rabbinical circles. In Gen. ii. 2f. God is said to have rested on the seventh day after creating the world in six days. 'Rested', it is said, cannot mean that God desisted from all activity in the world He had made. The words of Exod. xxxi. 17 were quoted, 'On the seventh day God rested and was refreshed.' 'Refreshed' was interpreted as 'refreshed for new work'. The Divine Creative power having accomplished the great work of creation, 'rested', God's immediate purpose being fulfilled. This rest is accompanied by the re-

[1] It is fitting here to note that the real origin of the prohibition against carrying burdens on the Sabbath day is to be found in Jewish opposition to the complete secularization of the Sabbath. People must not do their shopping on that day, and trade should not be carried on. The rabbinic legal regulations were dealing with what is also a modern social problem. The religious authorities were aware that destruction of the Sabbath rest-day created a real danger to the higher values of human life. It is as well that we should remember this when we criticize their methods. On the Jewish conception of the Sabbath see Moore *JFC* II. 21-39.

lease of new Divine powers. We have an analogy in the human sphere. An artist who has succeeded in painting a fine picture must be conscious of fresh power waiting to be released within himself for future work. The rabbis interpreted this continued activity of God largely as an activity of 'judgment', by which they meant 'His activity towards the godless, and His activity towards the upright' (cf. *v.* 22). Also God alone upholds the world that He has made, and maintains in existence by His immediate will and power all that exists (Ps. civ. 10-30). These activities are not suspended on the Sabbath. The reply of Jesus means that the creative activity of God continues, and that in His own person and mission of healing it is perfectly manifesting itself. He claims that in this healing miracle, He is actually receiving the power from God Himself; *The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing.*[1] Jesus' claim to know God and God's will directly, as against the claims of the Scribes, is in harmony with what we know otherwise of the consciousness of Jesus. The Scribes are dependent on Scripture and on the traditional interpretation of its meaning. Compare *No one knoweth the Father but the Son* (Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22). Jesus' knowledge is direct knowledge. The wording of the discourse may owe something to the Evangelist, but the main ideas it expresses are the ideas of Jesus Himself regarding His relationship to God.[2] The words, *The Son can do nothing of himself save what he seeth the Father doing,* with their insistence on the subordination of Jesus to the Father (cf. *The Father is greater than I.* xiv. 28), do not strike one as an utterance which would spring spontaneously from the mind of a writer who thinks of Jesus as the Eternal Logos made flesh. They give prominence to the same conception of Jesus' dependence on the Father as is contained in 'All things have been delivered unto me of my Father' (Matt. xi. 27), where the emphasis is on *delivered* and not on *all things.* The same thought underlies Mark x. 18, 'Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, even God.' Jesus is not repudiating 'goodness', but teaches that all His own beneficent activity has its source in

[1] Cf. Mark ii. 28; Luke xi. 20.

[2] Cf. Burkitt *GHT*, pp. 237ff.

God. The meaning of that 'good life' is hidden unless it brings men into touch with God.

The idea of the *subordination* of Jesus to the will of God is a main feature of the Evangelist's thought. Compare iv. 34: 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work' (cf. vi. 38); v. 20: 'The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that he himself doeth'; viii. 26: 'The things which I heard from him, these speak I unto the world'; viii. 28: 'I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things'; viii. 30: 'I can of myself do nothing: as I hear, I judge'. Note these various expressions of the relationship between Jesus and God. Not only do they express subordination to God, but subordination in terms of *human* faculties and capacities. In this unique relationship, Jesus does not dissociate Himself from common human experience. 'He that doeth the will of my Father in heaven, the same is my mother, and sister', etc. (Matt. xii. 50). This subordination of Jesus must always be kept in mind when we consider the Johannine teaching on the person of Christ.

20 *Greater works than these will he shew him.* These *works* are the achievements of the Apostolic Church (cf. Acts iv. 13). The quotation from Habakkuk i. 5 (cf. Acts xiii. 40) may be in mind: 'Behold ye among the nations, and regard and wonder marvellously; for I work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.' The *greater works* will silence the scoffing of Jesus' opponents (cf. xiv. 12).
21 These *works* are now defined as the awakening of those who are spiritually dead. Jesus elsewhere speaks of those who reject His message as 'dead' (Matt. viii. 22). The prodigal son was 'dead and is alive again' (Luke xv. 32; cf. Matt. xi. 5). The man at Bethesda is a symbol of those who are spiritually dead. The stupendous fact that God raised Jesus from the dead, that He is not merely alive in another world but reigning and working, is used in the New Testament not only as the pledge of immortality, but also as a sign of the Divine power that changes the lives of men (1 Pet. i. 3; Rom. iv. 24; vi. 13). It is in this sense mainly that resurrection from

the dead is spoken of in this Gospel. 24 The believer has already *passed out of death into life* (cf. 1 John iii. 14). Compare the quotation from an early Christian hymn in Eph. v. 14. See note on verses 28, 29.

22 *The Father . . . hath given all judgment unto the Son.* The *judgment* takes place here and now. The word means not only 'condemn' or 'pass sentence on', but also 'separate'. As believers or unbelievers in Jesus, men are already being separated. They live lives as distinct from one another, in their inner motives, influence, and attitude to their fellows, as light from darkness, life from death.

23 The words recall Mark ix. 37 (Matt. x. 40; Luke ix. 48). The balanced sentence is characteristic of the style of Jesus.

25 *Verily, verily, the hour cometh and now is.* The repetition of 'verily' (='Amen') always in this Gospel introduces a majestic claim (cf. i. 51). The reference is still to a quickening which takes place in the present. 27 Also to an *authority to execute judgment* given to the *Son of Man*, here and now. Here and now, unbelief in Christ involves condemnation. If the word 'judgment' sounds harsh we must remember that the environment in which they are spoken is one where the acceptance or rejection of the Christian message did indicate a dividing line between good and evil, right and wrong ways of living. There was then no civilization unconsciously permeated by Christian standards. The Christian way of life, based on whole-hearted belief in Christ, was distinct from the pagan way. It was a moment in the history of the world when the Church saw clearly that on belief in and obedience to Jesus Christ, the fate of the world depended. Is it not demanded of us that we think of the future of civilization in the same clear terms to-day? The Johannine words describing the 'judgment' committed to Christ here and now, denote clear thinking in the light of contemporary conditions, rather than dogmatic and fanatical intolerance towards the unbeliever. The Father *gave him authority*. The giving of authority belongs not to the pre-Incarnate life, but to the days of His flesh (cf. *v.* 19). *Because he is the Son of Man* (cf. pp. 6ff.). The title is used in the full Messianic significance. The absence of the definite article in the

Greek does not indicate that the humanity of Jesus, His sympathy with and experience of human conditions, fit Him to act as Judge, as the R.V. margin translation suggests.

28, 29 *The hour cometh* (see notes on iv. 21, 23). A main characteristic of the Johannine thought regarding Christ as Judge at the Last Day is that the function of Judge is transferred also to the human life of Jesus, as we have just seen. This does not mean, however, that the Evangelist has abandoned the belief in the Second Advent of Christ. In 1 John ii. 18, the appearance of 'Antichrists' is a sign of this imminent coming judgment, 'the last hour'. The thought of Christ as present in all His power now, and also as about to come in the future is combined in 1 John iv. 1, 2. There the final appearing and the complete transformation into *his likeness* is but the consummation of a process that is already going on in life. The meaning of verses 28, 29 is that even those who have actually died—*all that are in the graves*—will be raised alive—to 'give account of the deeds done in the body' (cf. 2 Cor. v. 10, where the similarity of language is striking). The words were aimed at an unethical mysticism, current in Hellenistic religious circles, where the life in the body is regarded as an entanglement of the soul in grosser matter. The Christian conception is that men are held responsible for deeds done in the flesh. The casting away of the flesh at death does not mean the shedding of the evil and grosser side of a man's nature, while their souls are saved. Whatever the physiological conception underlying the clause in the Apostles' Creed, 'I believe in the resurrection of the body', men are not asked to profess an outworn physiological belief when they recite it, but to say that they believe that we shall appear before God then, as we do now, complete human personalities, accountable for all that our eyes have seen, our hands done, our brains conceived in this life, whether it be good or bad. The thought of what our bodies may have suffered, and the way in which bodily suffering is used, should not be excluded. The conception of verses 28, 29 is meant as much to minister hope, and to stimulate moral earnestness (1 John iii. 3) as to warn. 'The Christian hope is not clouded by the judgment seat of Christ; it is sustained

at the holy height which befits it.'[1] If in this world we never see the last of anything we have done, yet we shall not be judged ' after the flesh '.

Corroborative witness to the Divinity of Jesus. vv. 30-47; vii. 15-24.

(1) The Witness of the Baptist (32-35).
(2) The Witness of the Father (36-38).
(3) The Witness of the Scriptures (39-47; vii. 15-24).

31 The word *witness*[2] is characteristic of this Evangelist. To witness is not merely to give certain corroborative statements, but to be the instrument through which the eternal spiritual reality, the Truth, manifests itself. Jesus Himself ' witnesses '. He has come from heaven, and continually knows the secrets of heaven and reveals them (iii. 32). All who have penetrated to the ' Light ' through Him, know the Truth and become capable of witness. The final witness is borne by God Himself. He is witnessing to men through the Baptist, through Christ's own works, through the Scriptures, as well as through Jesus Himself (*v.* 37).

32-35 (1) *The Witness of the Baptist.*

Jesus recalls His opponents to hear the ' witness ' or voice of God Himself, which *for a season* they heard in the Baptist's preaching (cf. Mark xi. 30). The business of the Church is not merely to speak about God but to hear ' what God the Lord will speak ', and communicate it in word and life to the world.

36-38 (2) *The Witness of the Father.*

The works of Jesus are ' signs ' by which the presence and working of the Divine power is revealed. The Jews have failed to hear the voice of God and to see His *form* (the *Word made flesh*) in the words and ministry of Jesus.

[1] J. Denney, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Expositor's Bible, p. 184.
[2] The noun ' witness ', referring to persons (*martyrs*), is never used. Either the verb *martyreō*, ' bear witness ', or *martyrion*, the witness borne, is employed.

(3) *The Witness of the Scriptures.* 39-47; vii. 15-24.[1]

39 *Ye search the Scriptures* (R.V.). Study of the Torah was the first duty of every pious Jew. In the rabbinical schools it was 'an uncontested axiom that every syllable of Scripture had the verity and authority of the word of God. . . . The notion of progressive revelation was impossible; the revelation to Moses was complete and final.'[2] *Ye think that in them ye have eternal life.* One rabbi of the first century A.D. says: 'If for food, which provides for the life of the fleeting hour, your duty is to offer praise before and after eating, how much more does it hold of the Torah in which is the world to come, that a man's duty is to offer praise before and after reading.' Jesus says that the source of life in the Scriptures is He to whom they testify. In the days of His flesh, Jesus, Himself a diligent student of Scripture, taught His disciples to find in the Scriptures messages from God that pointed forward to Himself and His mission. In particular, He taught them what He Himself had found, that the description of the mission and suffering of the 'Servant of the Lord' in Isaiah (lii. 13–liii. 12) found its fulfilment in His own Messianic mission.[3]

It is certain that Jesus had Himself been trained in rabbinic study of the Scriptures. There are eighty-seven quotations from the Old Testament on the lips of Jesus in the Gospels. His own disciples and others address Him as 'Teacher' (always translated 'Master'). The Greek word is really a translation of 'Rabbi'. We are told that He taught in the Synagogues, which would not have been possible had He not been recognized as a competent authority, although He was not an official rabbi. His teaching had an originality that distinguished it from that of the Scribes. He taught 'with authority', i.e. He did not quote authorities, but showed that He was one. There is also the story in Luke ii. 41-51 of His being found at the age of twelve in the Temple talking with the Rabbis. It is pertinent to note two things about this story, in view of the fact that it has sometimes been

[1] On the inclusion of vii. 15-24 at this point, see pp. 80, 176.

[2] Moore *JFC* I. 239.

[3] On the general question of Jesus' use of the Old Testament Scriptures, see B. H. Branscomb, *Jesus and the Law of Moses*, pp. 113-182.

interpreted as implying that Jesus at an unusually early age had a miraculous knowledge of the Scriptures, was a kind of infant prodigy. Twelve years is equivalent to about seventeen or eighteen in the West, and He is represented as 'both listening to' the Rabbis (i.e. for instruction) as well as 'asking them questions', many of which may well have been in quest of further knowledge. Moreover, the kind of home from which He came would ensure that He had been instructed in the Scriptures. Jesus treated the Scripture with reverence and did not merely spend His time antagonizing those who fanatically prized the 'letter' of Scripture. Much more did He antagonize their deductions from it. 'The possibility of taking up an attitude different from or hostile to that of the Scribes implies an acquaintance with their methods.'[1] In verse 39 Jesus does not say that intensive study of the Old Testament must take a subordinate place in the lives of those who are His disciples; but that such study properly understood, actually should lead men to come to Himself and tell men more of Himself. *These . . . witness of me.* More important than all is it that Jesus, by virtue of His unique consciousness of God, was able to guide men to select[2] in their study of Scripture, to study it for themselves and not merely blindly to trust the expert; to find in Himself and in His teaching the fulfilment of God's eternal purpose which comes to light in the teaching of prophet and psalmist, and in the history of His own people.

41-47 In this section the idea of the Scriptures as containing the Divine testimony to Jesus is still prominent. His opponents, however, who study them are not moving in the

[1] T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 47ff. For the use of rabbinic method in argument by Jesus cf. Matt. xxii. 43; Mark xii. 26f. Jesus speaks with reverence of Scripture. Ps. cx. 1 is written 'in the Holy Spirit' (Matt. xii. 36; cf. Mark vii. 8, 9, 13).

[2] Many Jewish teachers in our Lord's time were no doubt quite aware that there was an intrinsic difference between eating pork and injuring a fellow-man, but that did not lessen the authority of the Law which forbade both. God ordained it so, and must be obeyed. The soullessness to which such a view of the Scriptures reduced religion is illustrated by a quotation from Johanan ben Zakai, who did more than any other to save Judaism after the catastrophe of A.D. 70. 'A corpse does not defile nor water make clean, but it is a command of the King of kings.' Cf. B. H. Branscomb, *op. cit.*, pp. 181f.; Moore *JFC* II. 6f.

same world as that to which the Scriptures belong. It is a world where men seek their own glory, and one with which Jesus must not identify Himself. 44 Scripture study had become a world in which men sought fame by showing their intellectual prowess. One big authority was set over against another, and the result was barren logomachy where men sought *honour one of another*. The reference is much more likely to this spirit in the rabbinical schools than, as has been suggested, to the influence of false political Messiahs. There are many quotations from rabbinical writings which indicate that the Rabbis laid great stress on the reverence due to them from their disciples, and between fellow-Rabbis. We are reminded of Jesus' rebukes of vanity and self-seeking on the part of Rabbis; 'works done to be seen of men' (Matt. xxiii. 5-12). These charges are not made against Pharisees in general, but against the rabbinic teachers and the honour they claimed. That the charges are well-founded is proved by warnings in the Talmud itself against such temptations on the part of the Rabbis.[1] Such men have not *the love of God* (i.e. the Divine spirit of love towards men) within them. Such a religion does not go out 'to seek and to save the lost'.

Something deeper than scholarship is needed in order to understand the Scriptures.

vii. 15-24

vii. 25 follows much more naturally on vii. 14. In vii. 23 there is an unmistakable reference to the miracle at Bethesda. It will at least be appropriate to deal with the section at this point.

15 *Having never learned;* i.e. without the stamp of rabbinic ordination upon Him. He is not known as the accredited pupil of any particular Rabbi. 16 Along with His employment of rabbinic methods and lore, Jesus claims that His teaching comes from God. He brought with Him that 'knowledge' of God which can alone interpret God's will and override the formalism of mere book-learning. 17, 18 Moreover, such knowledge of God is open to all who humbly seek to do God's will, and seek not their own glory.

[1] Cf. A. Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* II. 408ff

The trained mind outs the upright soul,
As Jesus said the trained mind might,
Being wiser than the Sons of Light;
But trained men's minds are spread so thin,
They let all sorts of darkness in.
Whatever light man finds they doubt it,
They love not light but talk about it.[1]

19 *Did not Moses give you the law?* The rabbinic doctrine of the day was that Moses dictated not only the Pentateuch but the whole Torah. 'Moses is the fountain-head of prophecy in so literal a sense that he uttered all the words of the prophets besides his own.'[2] 22 The parenthetical comment of the Evangelist in verse 22 points out that the rite of circumcision goes back to Abraham (Gen. xvii. 10). 23 There is an interesting rabbinic parallel to the argument here used. Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah (A.D. 80-120) said, 'If for the sake of circumcision, which affects only one of a man's members, the Sabbath is to be disregarded, how much more is it to be disregarded for the sake of the rest of the body!'[3] The argument throughout the passage is in the rabbinical style. It is pointed out that the Jews' desire to kill Jesus is a contravention of the sixth commandment (*v.* 19; cf. v. 16, 18). Circumcision according to the Law had to be performed on the eighth day (Lev. xii. 3); yet the oral tradition permitted it to be done on the Sabbath, notwithstanding that the act technically involved a breach of the Sabbath law (cf. Matt. xii. 11; Luke xiii. 15). Jesus appeals to the oral tradition and claims equal liberty to interpret the Law in the interests of humanity. Probably some Rabbis would have agreed with Jesus in His interpretation. One well-known rabbinical comment runs, 'The Sabbath is delivered to you, and you are not delivered to the Sabbath' (cf. Mark ii. 27). Are the opponents Sadducees?[4]

2. JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE. vi. 1-71.

The chapter is to be taken as a whole. The two 'signs'

[1] John Masefield, *The Everlasting Mercy*.
[2] Moore *JFC* I. 239.
[3] Quoted by H. Loewe, *Judaism and Christianity* I. 169.
[4] Cf. p. 87.

recorded in verses 1-21 are introductory to the long discourse (*vv.* 22-71).

The Feeding of the Multitude. vv. 1-15.

This miracle is recorded in all the Gospels. In Mark there are two accounts (vi. 30-46; viii. 1-10). Mark incorporates two narratives, differing in certain details. He evidently has at his disposal two short itineraries presumably of the same journey (cf. the same general order of incidents in Mark vi. 30–vii. 37, and Mark viii. 1-26). The important point to notice is how firmly the story, in its *five* differing forms, is fixed in the earliest Christian tradition.

1 *Sea of Tiberias.* The town of Tiberias was built by Herod Antipas and named in honour of the Emperor. It is more than doubtful if the town would have been built in Jesus' day. The Evangelist's comment therefore shows that he is 'up to date' as regards nomenclature. Luke (ix. 10) says that the miracle took place near Bethsaida. On this site, see Smith *HGHL* 456f.

2 *A great multitude.* Mark seems to indicate (vi. 30) that the appearance of the crowd may have had something to do with the preaching mission of the disciples. John represents their appearance as due to the impression made by Jesus' own miracles (cf. p. 180).

3 *He sat with his disciples.* 'Sitting' was the appropriate posture for the teacher. Jesus is represented as engaged in teaching the disciples, having drawn them away from the crowd into the higher country above the lake.

4 *The passover . . . was at hand.* The relevance of the words is not immediately apparent. The crowds could scarcely be on their way to the Passover. Would they start on so long a journey without food, and would they be likely to turn aside from the main route to Jerusalem? Can the Evangelist mean to suggest that they preferred to come where Jesus was? If so, are they represented as receiving what the Passover could not give them? We shall see that this Evangelist clearly states that Jesus had the final meal with His disciples on the day *before* another Passover (xiii. 1).

5 In contrast with the Synoptic accounts, Jesus and not the

disciples, first becomes anxious about food for the multitudes; compare Mark vi. 34, where it is Jesus who feels their spiritual need. John represents Him as caring for both body and spirit.

6, 7 The question is addressed to Philip, who is inclined to judge the situation only by what his eyes tell him, as he looks on the numbers before him, realizing only the poverty of their resources. The question *Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?* on the lips of Jesus indicates that this enterprise of providing the 'bread of life' for the multitude (symbolizing the whole world): (*a*) originates in the Divine mind of Jesus, and is therefore God's initiative; (*b*) that Jesus is aware that the Divine resources are ample. Jesus seeks to *try* Philip. This practical type of Christian must be brought to realize that all missionary enterprise originates in an adequate human interpretation of the Divine purpose, and is not merely a human desire to spread our own religious convictions, limited by our material resources. *He himself knew what he would do.* The Evangelist repudiates the idea that Jesus asks a question because He is at a loss (cf. pp. 231f.).

9 *A lad,* perhaps *a servant.* He may have been in the employment of some merchant who sold food wherever people congregated. There are certain striking similarities between this part of the story and the narrative of Elisha in 2 Kings iv. 42-44. There we meet with the 'servant', 'barley-loaves', a parallel to Andrew's sceptical question, and the miraculous multiplication. We must allow for the creative influence of the prophetic narratives on the oral Christian tradition of events in the life of Jesus.

10 *There was much grass in the place.* Compare the 'green grass' of Mark vi. 39. Grass would more likely be found on the level plain than on the high ground (*v.* 3). Jesus is represented in verse 3 as trying to avoid the crowd, by retiring with His disciples and then returning to meet it alone.

11 *He distributed.* In this story Jesus Himself is represented as distributing the food. The mention of the disciples here is an insertion in the text; a scribal assimilation for the sake of harmony, to the other Gospels.

13 Here the baskets only heighten the miracle. Mark viii. 19ff. implies a Eucharistic meaning. (Cf. p. 184.)

14, 15 These verses are of great interest in the light of the Marcan narrative of what followed (vi. 45f.), and illustrate how much actual historical material is embedded in the Johannine narrative. The two accounts supplement one another.

The Johannine account clearly indicates that the result of the miracle was to provoke a temper of political excitement among the crowd. They spoke of Jesus as *the prophet, that cometh into the world.* In order to avoid what might have been an abortive and disastrous Messianic rising (*they were about to come and take him by force, to make him a king*), Jesus withdraws again to the mysterious mountain (rather 'high land'; cf. verse 3). What happened to the disciples? John and Mark both narrate that they crossed the sea, but Mark tells us that Jesus '*constrained*' (or 'compelled') His disciples to go to the other side of the lake. Why this constraint was put on them, Mark does not say. John gives the clue. It is in order that they might escape from a dangerous atmosphere. There was the risk of a Messianic rising, in which the disciples might too easily have become involved. Jesus himself disperses the crowd. Mark's first narrative also suggests that the presence of the crowd was due in some way to the disciples' preaching (vi. 30-33). Can it have been that their presentation of the message was still crude, and mingled with political aspirations of their own which lingered in their minds to the end? (Mark vi. 7-13; Matt. x. 7-15; Luke ix. 3-6; x. 1-12). Galilee was full of discontent. Poverty, disease and overcrowding were rife. The instructions Jesus gave the disciples when He sent them out on their mission were as much concerned with the impression He wished them to make on their hearers as with their own self-discipline. They must not appear as men who enjoyed those comforts of life which many of their hearers longed to have, and which several political Messiahs, leaders of revolt, had promised. The temptation to win allegiance by turning 'stones into bread', He himself repelled at the outset of His ministry. The Marcan account of Jesus' reception of their report on their mission does not suggest that it satisfied Him (Luke x. 17-20). They were excited, and He encouraged them to go with Him

to some quiet place and 'rest awhile' (vi. 31). They needed rest and healing for soul as well as for body. If there had been mingled with the disciples' preaching crude political aspirations, we can understand how the crowd were already prepared to acclaim Jesus as *the prophet that cometh into the world*. 'Prophet' was a dangerous word on the lips of such a crowd. It meant 'King', a King-Messiah. Jesus was in danger of being regarded as a kind of Theudas, referred to in Acts v. 36. Josephus (*Antiquities* xx. 51) says that Theudas 'persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them, and to follow him to the river Jordan: for he told them he was a prophet, and that he would by his own word divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it, and many were deluded by his words'. Theudas' end came in A.D. 44, when he was captured and executed by the Romans, but there had been others before him. Jesus was mistaken for a Saviour-Messiah of this type. These were accustomed to exploit the prophecy of Deut. xviii. 15, 18.

It is difficult to see how John's account of the miracle and its results can be regarded as dependent on either of the Marcan accounts. The Johannine and the Marcan account of the ultimate effect of the miracle so artlessly supplement one another that it is impossible that John vi. 15 can be just another rendering of Mark vi. 45. Mr. Gardner-Smith in his comparative treatment of this story,[1] to which I am greatly indebted, has made out a most convincing case for a separate Johannine tradition of the miracle. The introduction is quite different from Mark's (vi. 30-34). Any verbal coincidences like *'two hundred pennyworth of bread'* or the mention of 'grass' might easily be accounted for by the preservation of such details in otherwise differing oral or written traditions.

The Walking on the Water. vv. 16-21.

In one of the traditions followed by Mark (vi. 47-51), the miracle of the Feeding of the Multitude is followed by and closely linked with (Mark vi. 52) the story of the Stilling of the Storm. The most striking agreement between John and

[1] *SJSG*, pp. 31f.

Mark is the word of Jesus, 'It is I. Be not afraid.'[1] John sees a symbolic meaning in this conjunction, and makes it contribute to the teaching of the discourse that follows, on the Bread of Life.

17, 18 *Jesus had not yet come to them. And the sea was rising* (R.V.). The tenses suggest that they had intended to wait for Jesus to return, but that owing to the signs of a coming storm they decided not to do so. 19 *Walking on the sea.* This phrase has been interpreted as meaning 'walking on the sea-shore'. In xxi. 1 the same phrase is used to mean that Jesus appeared to His disciples '*by* the Sea of Tiberias', and in verse 21 the same preposition must be translated *at* the land. It is, however, undoubted that in Mark, walking *on* the water is understood, and in Matthew's account certainly. Matthew adds the story of Peter's attempt to tread the waves (xiv. 28ff.). The non-miraculous interpretation in John is by some said to be confirmed by the words, *and straightway the boat was at the land whither they were going* (*v.* 21). The assumption is that Jesus, as He had promised, followed the boat on foot on the shore, waiting to be taken on board. They would be hugging the shore on account of the storm. If we are to seek an historical basis for the incident, it might be found in this direction; but it would be indeed remarkable if the Fourth Evangelist thus removed the miraculous from a traditional story firmly fixed as miraculous. His tendency is rather to heighten the miraculous. If he meant that the disciples had caught sight of Jesus on the beach, it would be rather inappropriate to add that *they were afraid.*

The Discourse on the Bread of Life. vv. 25-71.

Verses 22-24 are intended as an historical link with what precedes. The writer seeks to account for the presence of the crowd again on the other side of the lake. The statement is so involved and artificially detailed that it is permissible to suspect that here there may have been some editorial interference. At all events the Evangelist is not really concerned with the exact way in which the crowd get across. His object

[1] Whether the Evangelist is dependent on Mark for the story is discussed by Mr. Gardner-Smith *SJSG*, pp. 33ff.

is to make it plain that the same people who were miraculously fed are the audience to whom the discourse on the Bread of Life was addressed.[1]

Note that the Evangelist is equally anxious to connect the story of the Walking on the Water with the subject of the discourse. This miracle of the storm is aptly associated with this story. The boat on the stormy sea is a symbol of the Church in a situation of danger. Mark vi. 52 has already suggested a connexion between the faithless fears of the disciples in the storm and their forgetfulness of the power displayed in the previous miracle (cf. Mark viii. 14-21). The miracle of the Feeding and the miracle of the Storm together are used as an introduction to the discourse on the Bread of Life. The Walking on the Water in particular is a symbol of Jesus' presence with His Church, and His power and willingness to aid His people in their times of danger and stress. He is not subject to the laws which govern material conditions of existence. The crowd are ignorant of this spiritual truth. '*Rabbi,*' they say, '*when camest thou hither?*' The storm-tossed boat symbolizes the Church, and Jesus can communicate with the Church in its need everywhere, in spite of storms. There is no 'stilling of the storm' in the Johannine narrative. Believers are not promised exemption from external danger; but Christ received into the heart of His Church, guarantees the success of its mission, no matter how adverse the circumstances. He is at all times the 'living Bread'.

The Discourse is not sacramental in reference throughout. The sacramental reference is evident in verses 48-58, but verses 36-40, 44-47 are irrelevant to any purely sacramental teaching. So far as the Evangelist has the Eucharist in mind, it would appear that he is discouraging the idea that only in the Eucharist is the 'real presence' of Christ, the Bread of Life, to be found. Ignatius speaks of 'breaking one bread, which is the medicine of immortality, and the antidote that we should not die but live for ever'.[2] Such language might easily lead to a magical conception of the Sacrament. Dr.

[1] *Gave thanks* (*v.* 23, *eucharistēsantos*) suggests a sacramental reference.
[2] *Ephesians* 20.

Campbell Moody quotes these words spoken by a non-Christian Chinese: 'I understand that when the Christians take the bread and wine, their natures are changed, so that a bad-tempered man becomes good-tempered, so that an opium-smoker loses his love of opium, and a gambler his love of gambling, and a vicious person becomes a virtuous one.'[1] Without minimizing the value of the Sacrament, the Evangelist rejects a conception of it that would isolate the presence of Christ in the Sacrament from His presence in the everyday life of the believer.

A sacramental interpretation of the story in verses 1-15 is not apparent. This is all the more remarkable, inasmuch as in the two Marcan accounts (vi. 34-44; viii. 1-8), and particularly in the second, judging by the language used, it is apparent that the story was already connected in Christian thought with the Lord's Supper. We find, 'looking up to heaven', 'blessed and brake', 'having given thanks' (*eucharistēsas*), 'he brake' (viii. 6). This is sacramental language. Sacramental usage is also suggested by the statement that the bread and the fish[2] are given to the crowd by the hands of the disciples. It is remarkable that this statement is omitted in the Johannine account. Jesus himself makes the distribution. The omission cannot be accidental, and should be taken along with the words of verse 5, where Jesus himself, and not the disciples (as in the Marcan stories), first thinks of the hunger of the multitude. Neither does the Evangelist say anywhere that Jesus 'brake'. He it is that orders the gathering of the fragments left, which has been interpreted as indicating a sacramental view of the elements. Much more likely is it meant to suggest that of this spiritual food, there is enough and to spare for all human needs at all times. It is also remarkable that the 'desert place' of Mark (vi. 31; viii. 4) does not appear. In Paul's thought (1 Cor. x. 3) the spiritual food and drink given to Israel in the desert is connected with what he says on the Lord's Supper. It is also to be noted that 'give thanks' (*eucharistein*) (vi. 11) is used elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel without sacramental reference (xi. 41).

[1] *The Mind of the Early Converts*, p. 22.

[2] Fish is used as a sacramental symbol in the frescoes of the catacombs.

Also the ' looking up to heaven ', a very ancient feature in the sacramental ritual, is omitted, but occurs in xvii. 1. The absence of all these features mentioned need not be due to deliberate omission from the Marcan account; rather to the fact that John had before him an independent source, in which the incident was not interpreted in a purely eucharistic sense.

The Discourse may be thus divided:

(1) Jesus is the Bread of Life (25-40).
(2) Meeting Jewish objections to the conception of Jesus as the Bread of Life (41-50).
(3) An Interpretation and Extension of Sacramental Experience (51-59).
(4) The Sifting of Disciples (60-71).

(1) *Jesus is the Bread of Life. vv.* 25-40.

26 *Not because ye saw signs* (R.V.). The aspect of the two preceding miracles as ' signs ' is stressed. The multitude have seen in the bread only material food. They are in the same mood as that described in verse 15.

The food they had received may have suggested also to their minds those material blessings which are described so luxuriantly in certain forms of utopian Messianic expectation. ' The fruit-trees were every day, or at least every week or two, to yield their riches, the fields their harvests; the grain was to stand like palm-trees, and to be reaped and winnowed without labour. . . . Every produce, of every clime, would be found in Palestine in such abundance and luxuriance as only the wildest imagination could conceive.'[1]

27 *Which the Son of Man shall give you.* The Son of Man is a heavenly Being, and alone has access to the resources of heaven (cf. i. 51). *Sealed.* God has authenticated Jesus, both in His person and His mission. He is ' sent ' or commissioned by God (cf. v. 19 and note). The sovereign gives his seal

[1] A. Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus* II. 28. It is, however, not to be forgotten that these so materialistic hopes arose in and appealed to the hearts of a peasantry who wrung from the soil their daily food by the sweat of their brow. Cf. A. C. Welch, *Visions of the End*, p. 35.

to his vicegerent or ambassador (Gen. xli. 42). The whole verse recalls the thought of Deut. viii. 3. Compare also John iii. 33f., where the believer by his faith confirms that Jesus is the 'truth' of God, actually sent by God. A seal usually bore the name of the owner. In rabbinical thought, 'truth' is said to be the 'seal' of God.[1] Throughout the Old Testament 'truth' stands for the very character of God. Compare *the true bread from heaven* (*v.* 32).

28 *The works of God.* The injunctions of the Law are in their minds. The Law is frequently referred to in rabbinical writings as 'bread'. 'Wisdom' (=the Law) is the 'tree of life' (Prov. iii. 18). 29 The keeping of the Law would hasten the good time coming, the Messianic age. To 'believe' is the only *work* asked of men in order to obtain eternal life. The Pauline doctrine is apparent (e.g. Rom. ix. 32).

30 The people ask for a 'sign' in the sense of a direct confirmation from heaven of the Messianic claim which Jesus had made. Compare Mark viii. 12, which also follows immediately on the story of the miraculous feeding; see also Matt. xvi. 1ff. and Deut. xiii. 2. *'What then doest thou for a sign?'* There is a play upon the word 'work' which is obscured in the English. *Doest thou*='workest thou'. Some cannot believe that Christ is really at work in individual lives, their own or another's, or in Church activities, unless there are continuous tangible or visible 'results'. Those whom yesterday Jesus fed are now asking Him for His credentials.

31 *Our fathers did eat manna . . . bread from heaven to eat.* Do the words mean that the crowd saw nothing 'supernatural' in what happened when Jesus gave them bread? In the Apocalypse of Baruch (*c.* A.D. 50) the gift of manna is regarded as one of the signs of the Messianic day.[2] A midrash on Ps. lxxii. 16 says that like the former redeemer Moses, the latter redeemer will cause manna to come down, as it is written, 'There shall be an handful of corn in the earth.'[3] Philo identifies the *Logos* with the manna, as part of his attempt to find the conceptions of Greek philosophy antici-

[1] Moore *JFC* II. 194f. The principal passage on which the idea was based was Dan. x. 21.

[2] xxix. 8.

[3] *Midrash Koheleth.*

pated in the Old Testament. He founds his thesis on Deut. viii. 3.[1] The quotation here is from Neh. ix. 15.

32 *Moses gave you not the bread from heaven* (A.V., which here is to be preferred to R.V.). The emphasis is both on the fact that Moses *gave* the manna, and that he did *not* give the true bread from heaven. Moses is represented as only the intermediary through whom God supplied the people's hunger. That which comes through a human mediator is regarded as temporary and inferior (cf. Gal. iii. 19). What God gave in Jesus—the true bread from heaven—He gave with His own hand and directly (cf. iii. 16). Compare the contrast in i. 17, and also the fact that Jesus does not distribute the bread to the multitude by the hands of the disciples. 33 *The bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven* (A.V. again is to be preferred to the R.V.). A clearer translation would be 'The bread . . . is bread that cometh down from heaven'; i.e. given directly by the hand of God Himself. Jesus Himself is this Bread of Life. In receiving what He gives, He is not a mere intermediary, but gives Himself. Compare *the bread which I will give is my flesh*, i.e. my very self (see note on *v.* 51). When Moses is thus spoken of as an intermediary who 'gives' by commission from God, it is meant that he had to explain to the people the uses of the manna. 'They wist not what it was' (Exod. xvi. 15ff.).

34 *Lord, evermore give us this bread* (cf. iv. 15). The speakers are unable to see in Jesus the Bread of Life. 35 *I am the bread of life: he that cometh . . . shall never thirst.* Compare the notes on iv. 13, 14. 'We are prone to seek something in Christ, other than Christ Himself' (Calvin). We are promised only the *necessaries* of the spiritual life in Jesus; the assurance of God's forgiveness, and the promise of victory over sin and death. (Cf. Calvin, *Institutes* II. xvi. 19.)

37-40 The answer given to the problem raised in verse 36 is contained in verses 37-40. The Jew must explain everything in relation to God. Everything that happens must be regarded as within the scope of the will and purpose of God.

[1] *Allegories of the Sacred Laws* III. 173f., Loeb I, p. 419.

This basal assumption is far removed from Mohammedan fatalism. The Jew blended in his thought very strangely cause and effect. Pharaoh is said to harden his own heart (Exod. viii. 32). In another place God hardens his heart (Exod. ix. 12).[1] Compare also Isaiah vi. 10, where the actual result of Isaiah's preaching and mission is described as the purpose of God. In Acts ii. 23, Peter describes the crucifixion 'at the hands of lawless men' as part of 'the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God'. Such a statement implies no denial of human free-will. 37 Here also Jesus says that *all that which the Father giveth me shall come unto me.* He is thinking of the total number of the community of believers. 38-40 Yet while the Father 'gives' or 'draws' (*v.* 44), all men are free to come: *him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* Jesus is come to do God's will, which is interpreted as meaning that none who are now within the ranks of His disciples should be 'lost', and also that *everyone that beholdeth the Son and believeth on him should have eternal life.* The promise of resurrection is given both to the community as a community or church, and to the individual; (*raise it up at the last day* (*v.* 39), *raise him up* (*v.* 40). Nothing could be further from the thought of this passage than the idea that God leaves the unbeliever to his fate. Even unbelief is within the knowledge and scope of God's love and power. The word translated *draw* is a tender word used in the Septuagint version of Jer. xxxi. 3: 'With loving kindness have I drawn thee.' Similarly in verse 45, '*draw*' is interpreted as the teaching of God. The teaching of God may be a spoken word, or the quiet discipline of life, or the sterner teaching of the moral consequences of evil.

The refrain, *I will raise him up at the last day* (*vv.* 39, 40, 44, 54), means that the purpose for which Christ came from heaven will be achieved and cannot fail. The nourishment of the Bread of Life cannot end in death. It is a succinct statement of the words in xiv. 3.

Personal immortality in this Gospel is regarded as the gift of

[1] These passages are from different documents in the literary construction of Exodus.

Christ Himself. It begins here and now with the beginning of communion with Himself. From beginning to end, it is a gift of God. Nothing could be in greater contrast with the Hellenistic conception of immortality, as seen in the Mystery and Hermetic religions. There the souls of men realize their divine essence, by mystical communion with the deity. The grosser element of the body is shed. Man is 'deified'.[1] Men are 'ghosts tied to corpses'. In New Testament thought soul and body together make up the human personality. There appears no such doctrine as the natural immortality of the soul. No soul can exist without a body as a means of individual expression. John does not, like Paul, deal with the question of the resurrection-body (1 Cor. xv), but his position is the same. We need not follow all Paul's reasoning in order to see the meaning of his conclusion. 'God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him' (1 Cor. xv. 38). In other words, we shall be full human personalities, capable of fellowship with other personalities and with God in the life to come.[2] John says practically the same thing. 'We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him' (1 John iii. 2). Future immortality is but an eternal continuance of a gift of the Divine Life of fellowship with God and with one another which is ours here and now. We receive the gift not because we deserve it, but because it is God's will that Christ should lose none of those that are given Him.

(2) *Jewish Objections. vv.* 41-50.

41, 42 The thought of this section centres around the claim that Jesus 'came down from heaven', and as 'the heavenly Manna'. The objection is raised that His origin is known, and that therefore He cannot be regarded as a celestial being.

It is remarkable that whenever this Evangelist deals with Jewish objections to the claims of Jesus, because His birth and origin are known (cf. i. 46; vi. 42; vii. 27), he never answers them by directly or indirectly asserting the Virgin birth. Twice he allows Jesus to be called the son of Joseph (i. 45; vi. 42). See note on viii. 41. 44-50 These verses are a repetition of the argument in verses 35-40.

(3) *An Interpretation and Extension of Sacramental Experience. vv.* 51-59.

The thought in this section centres around the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but flows beyond it. A new aspect of

[1] pp. 73f. [2] Cf. pp. 172f.

thought is introduced by the words, *The bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world* (*v.* 51). '*For*' means 'on behalf of', as in Mark xiv. 24; 1 Cor. xi. 24. At this point a definite reference to sacramental experience is apparent, and to the words of institution, 'This is my body', which the readers of the Fourth Gospel must have known as part of the earliest Christian tradition (1 Cor. xi. 23-25). It is noteworthy that 'flesh' (*sarx*) is here used, and not body (*sōma*). 'Body' would not convey the exact meaning to Greek readers, on account of the Greek tendency to separate soul and body. 'This is my body' means 'This is I myself' (p. 193). The intention of the Evangelist in using *flesh* instead of body is to emphasize the belief that the actual human personality and historical mission of Jesus are *given*, through His voluntary death, to the Christian with all their redemptive significance. Christianity is an historical religion, based as it is on what God actually did and gave in the sending of Jesus Christ into the world. It is very necessary to keep this in mind when we come to interpret the words of *vv.* 53f. (see notes on these verses). The *flesh* and the *blood* of Jesus Christ are one concept and not two. Jesus is a being of 'flesh and blood', i.e. a truly human personality. The climax of God's 'giving' (iii. 16) is reached in the voluntary death of the Son of Man. By death, the new life that He brought in His own person and ministry is released and set free for the whole world. When the Evangelist speaks of drinking the *blood* of Christ (*v.* 53), he is not introducing an idea other than is contained in the statement that Jesus gives His *flesh*. He is only further emphasizing that only by death is this *life* available for all. 'Flesh and blood' in Jewish thought denotes the complete human personality (1 Cor. xv. 50; cf. p. 193).

Whilst the Evangelist in *vv.* 52-57 is using sacramental language, the emphasis and intention of his thinking is to reassert his main central theme in the Gospel, that only through faith in the risen Christ, once an historical personality, is life obtained. Jesus was a being of flesh and blood, not a phantom as the Docetists taught. Communion with a Christ who was only a phantom on earth, whether in the Eucharist or on other occasions, can produce only a phantom experience.

He that eateth me shall live by me (*v.* 57).[1] These words of Calvin are to the point: 'In proportion as you advance in the experience of communion with Christ so do you receive profit from them (the sacraments). . . . Christ is the matter, or if you like, the substance of all the sacraments, since in Him they have their full content, and promise nothing apart from Him.'[2] It is possible that the Evangelist has in mind some superstitious notion of partaking of the elements which would entirely isolate the sacramental experience from other religious occasions.

The Evangelist is not alone in the manner of speech here employed. Ignatius (d. *c.* A.D. 115) in his polemic against Docetism, says, speaking of the Eucharist, 'I desire the bread of God which is the flesh of Christ, who was of the seed of David; and for drink, I desire His blood, which is love incorruptible.'[3] Lightfoot adds, 'Ignatius appears to mean that heavenly sustenance which is derived from union with a truly incarnate Christ through faith and love.'[4] In another letter Ignatius says, 'Do ye therefore arm yourselves with gentleness and be renewed in faith, which is the flesh of the Lord, and in love, which is the blood of Jesus Christ.'[5] Lightfoot adds another note which deserves to be quoted: 'The reference is only indirectly to the Eucharist. The Eucharistic bread and wine, while representing the flesh and blood of Christ, represents also faith and love. Faith is the flesh or substance of the Christian life; love is the blood coursing through its veins and arteries.'[6] To Ignatius, as to this Evangelist, it was a disastrous heresy that God did not fully identify Himself with human life in its subjection to sin, pain, and mortality; that the love and power incarnate on earth should not be real Divine love, 'the Truth'. The incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus guarantee the eternal value of human life in God's sight and its redemption from the power of evil.

[1] On the word 'eateth' see notes on *vv.* 53, 57.
[2] *Institutes* IV. xiv. 15, 16.
[3] *Romans* vii. 3.
[4] *Apostolic Fathers* II. ii, pp. 226f.
[5] *Trallians* viii. 1.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 171. It is uncertain whether Ignatius actually makes use of the Fourth Gospel. His words may only represent a common milieu of thought.

52 The question with which the 'Jews' meet the statement of *v.* 51, *How can this man give us his flesh to eat?* implies characteristic blindness to Jesus' meaning.[1] How can a man who is actually standing before us say, *the bread which I will give is my flesh?* 53 In verse 53 sacramental language is used. The language is peculiar and is the Evangelist's rendering of *Take, eat, this is my body* (Matt. xxvi. 26). *'Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the covenant'* (Matt. xxvi. 27). 'Eat' is a realistic metaphor and means 'assimilate'. Ezekiel is told to 'eat' a visionary 'roll' or book in which is written the message delivered to him, containing 'lamentations and mourning and woes'. In other words, the prophet must make it his own, however uncongenial it may be (Ezek. ii. 8–iii. 3). It is only by realizing this Hebrew use of the word 'eat', that we can understand the meaning of the words, *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves* (R.V.). The *primary* reference of *flesh* and *blood* is not to the sacrament, but to the demand for faith in a Christ, who became 'flesh and blood', i.e. truly man (see note on *v.* 57).

How far Christians in the Church at Ephesus, at the Communion Service, were in danger of confusing the visible embodiment of the truth with the truth itself, it is impossible to say. Yet Justin's words are always true, 'not as common bread and drink do we receive these'.[2] To partake is both an experience of faith and an expression of faith. 'This is my body' signifies more than merely 'represents' or 'means'. Rudolf Otto has made the important suggestion that our Lord's use of the symbol

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[1] I have abandoned the view stated in former editions, that this question contains an indirect reference to a supposed Hellenistic conception of 'eating the god' at a sacramental meal. It is a disputed point whether, in partaking of a sacrificial animal, these participants regarded themselves as partaking of the deity to whom it was dedicated. It seems much more likely that the god was simply the host who presided (Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions*, p. 259). This explanation is quite sufficient to account for Paul's prohibitions about eating meat offered to idols (1 Cor. viii. 1ff.). In any case, the early Christian had a very different conception of God from the Hellenistic devotee, and it is unlikely that the crasser conception could have constituted a danger in the Christian Church. Unthinking people may spontaneously arrive at a materialistic conception of the act of partaking, and of the elements. The Fourth Evangelist's thought moves on an entirely different plane.

[2] *Apology* I. lxvi. 2.

of broken bread is to be interpreted on the analogy of the symbolic acts of the Old Testament prophets. When Jeremiah is commanded to break a potter's bottle (xix. 10), or to wear a yoke (xxvii. 2), he means that something of the same nature will happen to his hearers. There is more in these representations than mere symbol. When Jeremiah wears the yoke he is carrying out the commandment of God, uttering God's spoken word, which is always effective, and 'accomplishes that whereto I sent it'. Hananiah, his opponent, thinks that he is rendering the action ineffective when he breaks the symbol, the yoke. We are confronted with what Otto has called 'effective representation'.[1] 'Effective representation' helps to bring into being what it depicts. Similarly the action of Jesus in breaking the bread signifies in this prophetic fashion, 'This will happen to me'; for 'body' really signifies 'self'. He is actually saying, 'This is myself', just as Jeremiah, in breaking the potter's bottle, really says, 'This is you'. Moreover, Jesus not only 'breaks' but 'gives' to the disciples. 'This,' He says, 'is myself given for you.' Thus He makes it plain that what He is about to do in giving through death His incarnate self, has redemptive significance for them.

53-56 What, then, is the distinctive place in Christian experience which is given to the death of Jesus in Johannine thought? The answer is contained in the phrase *drink his blood*. The words are almost repellent to us. Still more would they have startled a Jew. The blood of animals must not be used as food. 'Be sure thou shalt not eat the blood; for the blood is the life: and thou shalt not eat the life with the flesh' (Deut. xii. 23; cf. Lev. xvii. 14). The 'blood' of Jesus has acquired a realistic meaning in religious speech which it does not here possess. The blood is to the Jew the life[2] which is released at death, and belongs to God alone who gave it. It is a new idea that the 'blood' or 'life' of the Son of Man, released by death, is given to men and becomes the daily food of the believer. The sacramental idea is present

[1] R. Otto, *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man*, pp. 302ff. (E.Tr.); cf. Vincent Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice*, pp. 118f.

[2] Compare the way in which 'heart', 'reins', even 'flesh' (Ps. lxiii. 1), etc., are regarded as the seat of the emotional or intellectual life of man in Hebrew thought. This concrete psychology is a primitive trait. Various parts of the body are regarded as the seat of different aspects of the conscious life. The distinction is not made between the physical and the psychical. (Cf. H. Wheeler Robinson, *Religious Ideas of the Old Testament*, p. 81, and p. 62 of the present work.)

in these verses, but is extended to cover the general experience of the believer's union with Christ, an idea which pervades the Gospel. The Evangelist is in line with the Pauline thought of the death of Christ, inasmuch as he does not express the tragic sorrow and pity of Christ's death when he speaks in terms of His 'blood'. Nowhere in the New Testament are men exhorted to grieve for Him, nor are the events connected with the crucifixion recalled with sorrow. Death is swallowed up in a redemptive victory which men share. 'As often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye proclaim (or 'solemnly narrate', p. 274) the Lord's death until he come' (1 Cor. xi. 26, R.V.). The Johannine doctrine of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is that it is a symbol of personal appropriation of the victory of a living Christ, who truly lived and truly died, and now lives for ever. His life is a life for all that we can share, because on the Cross it was released for all. His death on the Cross is His 'lifting up' or exaltation, so that all believers may share that life (p. 138).

The death on the Cross is not isolated as a means of redemption, and in this respect the Johannine interpretation of the death of Christ is not so profound as Paul's. The impression is inescapable that in seeking to antagonize the Stoic doctrine of *apatheia*[1] as the distinctive trait of the ideal man, that doctrine has itself left its mark on the Johannine conception of the death of Christ as primarily exaltation. The writer has found it impossible fully to integrate the suffering in Gethsemane and the desolation of the Cross within the conception of a Christ into whose hand the Father has given all things. Mark says that in Gethsemane Jesus was 'greatly amazed and sore troubled'. There is no such realism in this Gospel. The Cross is but the triumphant way to the throne.[2] The Evangelist's thought rests on the unanalysed idea of the blood as the life. In the Epistle he uses sacrificial language. 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin' (1 John i. 7). 'He is the propitiation[3] for our sins' (1 John

[1] See pp. 55ff.

[2] Cf. R. Newton Flew, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology*, p. 117; Vincent Taylor, *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching*, p. 230. See also the notes on xi. 33ff.

[3] 'Propitiation' as a translation of *hilasmos* in the Epistle is not accurate.

ii. 2; iv. 10). Yet in neither case would it be true to say that the writer 'is thinking primarily of the moral and spiritual effects which are wrought by Christ in the consciousness of sinners'.[1] The meaning in both cases is that sins are annulled or taken away, so that they no longer stand between us and God. To the Johannine writer sin is death, and forgiveness is the gift of life.

Similarly the sacramental act of communion is not isolated in this Gospel. The idea of eating His flesh and drinking His blood is suggested by the words 'This is my body', 'This is my blood', but this communion with the living Christ is not confined to the sacramental experience. The idea is in line with the insistence throughout the Gospel on the doctrine of the true humanity of Jesus, as a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. We are to make the Incarnation—the 'flesh' given in life and death *for the life of the world* (vi. 51)—the wellspring and motive of all Christian living. This appropriation is made by faith. This faith is to be exercised at all moments in life, that Christ may 'abide' in us and we in Him. Here we have another form of the Pauline words, 'Not I, but Christ that liveth in me.'

57 The Evangelist has allowed his thought to dwell for a moment or two, apparently in illustration of his main theme —Jesus the Bread of Life—on the Christian rite which embodies that truth in symbol. That symbolized truth was never absent from the minds and eyes of the Christians for whom he wrote. It was familiar to them as they met so frequently at the Lord's Table. Had it become so familiar that they had tended to forget that this truth expressed in symbol was also a truth that was supremely relevant over the whole range of life? Jesus is at all times and everywhere the Bread of Life. *As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, he also shall live by me.*

The corresponding verb in Biblical Greek may mean 'purify' or 'cleanse'. The writer of the Epistle uses the conventional word for 'purify' (*katharizein*) when speaking of the efficacy of Christ's death in i. 7. 'Purification' would be a more accurate translation than 'propitiation'. Christ's death is a means of 'taking away' sin. (Cf. John i. 29; C. H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks*, pp. 94f.)

[1] Vincent Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

Note that *me* is substituted for 'flesh and blood'. All partaking of the 'bread of life', sacramentally or otherwise, involves a moral demand that men should live as partakers of the spirit in which Christ both lived and died. The parallelism of *v.* 57 shows that here the thought overflows beyond the sacrament. Jesus does not live by the Father sacramentally. One manuscript (Codex Bezae) has instead of 'he that eateth me', 'he that receiveth me', evidently paraphrasing. We may further illustrate the peculiar Hebrew use of the term 'eat' by the following quotation from the Babylonian Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 99a). 'Rabbi Hillel' (not the great Hillel) 'saith, Israel have no Messiah (yet to come), for they have already *eaten him* in the days of Hezekiah.' 'Eaten him' means *enjoyed* Messiah and the benefits of His coming.[1] 59 The teaching is said to have been given *in the synagogue at Capernaum*. Has the Evangelist made use of some traditional words of Jesus as He taught in this synagogue?

(4) *The Sifting of the Disciples. vv.* 60-71.

60 *A hard saying.* The reference is to verses 53-58, particularly *v.* 57. The utterance is hard, not because it is hard to understand but because it involves a tremendous moral demand. *To eat the flesh of the Son of Man and to drink his blood* is no mere liturgical statement. The words imply that men must carry out in their own lives that spirit in which the Son of Man became *obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross* (Phil. ii. 8). Taken as referring only to the Eucharist, they mean that the same sacrificial spirit of love, which the elements signify, must take possession of the communicant's heart and life. The saying is as 'hard' as, *If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me* (Matt. xvi. 24), spoken immediately after He had told His disciples that He must die. To say that the disciples found Jesus' words 'hard', is to describe in milder form their recoil from the idea of the Cross, voiced by Peter in Mark viii. 32. 61 *Doth this offend you?* The word translated *offend* ('cause you to stumble', R.V.) is the verb correspond-

[1] Quoted by W. Emery Barnes, *After the Celebration of the Oxford Movement. Some Considerations*, pp. 13f.

ing to the noun used by Paul in 1 Cor. i. 23, where he speaks of the Cross as a 'stumbling-block' to the Jews. The disciples felt that the giving of Christ's 'flesh and blood' in death, shattered all their former ideas of Messianic kingship, and of the coming of the Messianic Kingdom. It is therefore no wonder that they found such a spirit of selfless sacrifice hard to put into practice (cf. xvi. 1). 62 The further question, *What then if ye should behold the Son of Man ascending where he was before?* means that they will not understand the full significance of 'eating the flesh and drinking the blood' of Christ, until He has ascended in triumph to the Father. 63 *It is the spirit that quickeneth.* The Spirit comes on the disciples only after the crucifixion, or as the Evangelist puts it, after Jesus was 'glorified' (vii. 39). The victory of the Cross is the only source and pattern of all great sacrificial living. *The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life.* The *words* are those in verses 53-58. They teach and inspire men how to find their lives by losing them, to find them unto life eternal. The 'flesh' of Jesus is to be transformed in the heart of the believer, by His death and ascension, into 'the bread of life'. *The flesh profiteth nothing* (cf. iii. 6).

64, 65 *Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not and who it was that should betray him* (R.V.). Here again we find emphasized the omniscience of Jesus. The defection mentioned in verse 66, and the betrayal in verses 70, 71 do not take Him unawares.

66 *Many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.* The 'words' of Jesus have the effect of sifting His followers. In *vv.* 67-69 we have the Johannine version of Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (Mark viii. 29). Many of His disciples went back. The Twelve remained. Judas did a worse thing than go back. He remained as an enemy—perhaps not realizing how great an enemy—within the small fellowship. His secular outlook is a continual centre of hostility within the disciple band. 70 Jesus here calls him *a devil.* John evidently gives the full meaning to the epithet, regarding him as one who secretly and deliberately in will and purpose, set himself against the will and purpose of

Jesus, which is the will and purpose of God (cf. xiii. 2, 27). In Mark viii. 33 not Judas but Peter is called *Satan*.

3. THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS. vii. 1-14. 25-52. (vii. 15-24 is placed after v. 47. See pp. 81, 176ff.).

(*a*) *vv.* 1-14. *Why does He not proclaim Himself publicly?*

2 *The Feast of Tabernacles*, or the 'Feast of Booths'. It was originally a Harvest Festival, but had come to be associated with the deliverance from Egypt (Lev. xxiii. 43). It was held at the end of September or the beginning of October, and lasted for seven days. It was second only to the Passover in importance.

3-5 The question is raised by Jesus' brothers. It is noteworthy that their suggestion comes after the diminution of the disciple-circle in Galilee (vi. 66). The brethren suggest that He should try to make a fuller impression on the disciple-circle in Jerusalem. What the Galileans had rejected the Judeans might accept. Also the feast was an occasion on which many of those adherents of Jesus who had been perplexed (vi. 60), or even had left Him, might gather together. 'Here,' say the brethren, 'is the opportunity to revive a dying cause.' It is implied that they believed in Jesus' powers, but remonstrated that He should remain content to work with a small body of chosen disciples, and not obtain that world-recognition which was His due. This the Evangelist describes as unbelief on their part (*v.* 5).

6 *My time is not yet come.* The word translated 'time' means 'a fitting opportunity'. The brethren might go up at any time and any day. Jesus had to determine the time for public avowal of Messiahship involving crucifixion, which was God's 'hour', not determined by man. For Him to go up to Jerusalem now, was to go into the danger zone. (See pp. 231f.)

7 *The world cannot hate you.* They are not in danger of being received with hostility and certain death. They do not bring the Divine 'light' in which evil is self-disclosed. They share the views and outlook of the world, and do not provoke

or disturb it. They walk the road of compromise or conformity (cf. xv. 19.)

8 *I go not up unto this feast* (R.V.m.). 'Yet' should be omitted. 'Not yet' (*ouketi*) was later substituted by some glossator in order to obviate the difficulty raised by *v.* 10, which might imply on the surface that Jesus either told an untruth or had altered His intention. 10 *Then went he also up.* Did Jesus actually alter His mind? Two or three days' waiting is implied, a fact which must be considered along with xi. 6f. During the time of waiting, it is made clear to Jesus that He may, in accordance with God's will and without forcing the crisis, go up to the feast; *not publicly* (R.V.), as the brethren desired, but *as it were in secret*, i.e. *incognito*. The Triumphal Entry was not yet. Jesus must wait the 'hour' appointed by the Father. See notes on xi. 6f.

(*b*) *The Hidden Origin of Messiah. vv.* 25-36.

27 *No man knoweth whence he is.* The reference is to a popular Jewish idea of the mysterious origin and appearance of Messiah. The notion is similar to that recorded by Justin Martyr. A Jewish objector to Christianity speaks. 'Christ (i.e. Messiah), if he has indeed been born, and exists anywhere, is unknown, and does not even know himself, and has no power until Elias comes to anoint him, and make him manifest to all.'[1] 30 *His hour was not yet come.* Note the insistence which appears again and again in this Gospel, that the enemies of Jesus could not anticipate the moment appointed by God for His death (cf. viii. 20; x. 18).

32 *The chief priests and the Pharisees.* This is a significant combination. The *chief priests* belong to the sect of the Sadducees and concerned themselves with the Temple worship and revenues (p. 126). They were not closely in touch with the common people. The Pharisees were the popular religious leaders and concerned themselves with the synagogue, which was the real religious centre. They were in close touch with the popular mind. It is they who hear the 'murmurs' of popular opinion regarding Jesus. These two parties combine, when

[1] *Trypho* viii. cf. cx.

ecclesiastical and religious interests are threatened, to arrest Jesus.

33 *Yet a little while . . . and I go unto him that sent me.* These words are a refrain repeatedly on the lips of Jesus in this Gospel (xii. 35; xiii. 33; xiv. 19; xvi. 16-19). See pp. 296f. 34 *Ye shall seek me and shall not find me.* The opponents of Jesus saw no mystery in His person or mission. They are now told that there is a further mystery which they cannot penetrate. They are blind to the Divine origin and significance of His person and mission. *Where I am ye cannot come.* His enemies interpret the departure of Jesus from the earth as ruin, shame, and defeat. It is in reality His triumphant return to the Father, His work accomplished. It is His 'glorifying' (xvii. 1-5, 22). 35 *Will he go unto the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? Dispersion* is what is known as the *Diaspora*, i.e. the Jews who lived out of Palestine amid Greek populations (Ps. cxlvii. 2). The supposed mission is also to those Greeks themselves. The speakers are ironically represented as foreshadowing unconsciously the world-wide mission of the Christian Church (cf. xi. 51; xii. 20-23). Palestinian Jews of the stricter sort were suspicious of Diaspora Jews as open to Gentile influence. The question is contemptuous. They 'ask contemptuously whether He will leave the sacred places of Israel, where there are competent authorities to expose His claim, and go to those who are scattered among the Greeks, or perhaps try to win adherents among the Greeks themselves.'[1] The risk of exposure would be less in these regions. 36 Sarcasm, however, often conceals a deep perplexity. The speakers are still haunted by Jesus' words.

(*c*) *A Messiah who claims to give the Water of Life. vv.* 37-39. 37 *On the last day, the great day of the Feast.* This day was called the 'Great Hosanna'.[2] On each of the seven days of the feast, water was poured on the altar, accompanied by prayer. On each day, in the early morning, a priest with a following of attendants went to the pool of Siloam whose

[1] W. Temple, *Readings in St. John's Gospel*, p. 129.
[2] *Hosanna* = 'Save, I pray.' Cf. xii. 13.

water sprang from the rock on which the Temple stood. Amid the sound of flute-playing, and the recitation of passages such as Is. xii. 3, the priest filled a golden pitcher with water, which was carried back to the Temple with similar rejoicings. This, along with a pitcher of wine, was poured on the altar.[1] The ritual was a symbolic prayer for rain. On the *great day* this ceremony reached its climax. The prayer was a blessing on the rain for the coming year, which was regarded as extending to the whole world. Water is also frequently in the Old Testament regarded as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, promised in the Messianic age (Isaiah xliv. 3; Joel ii. 28; iii. 18, etc.). The Torah is also frequently likened to water (see notes on iv. 10). 'As water is life for the world, so also the words of the Torah were life for the world.' The Rabbis were in the habit of interpreting texts like Is. lv. 1; Prov. iv. 22; Ps. xix. 8, as meaning the Torah.[2]

37, 38 *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.* These words are suggested by the ritual of the water-pouring. As they stand they mean that Jesus gives the living water, and that every believer himself becomes a source of living water to his fellows; *Out of his belly . . . living water.* If *belly* be the word used, we have another example of the concrete way in which the Hebrew associated various parts of the human body with different aspects of the conscious life of man (note 2, p. 193). The *belly* is used of the innermost personality (cf. Habakkuk iii. 16; Ecclesiasticus li. 21). In Menenius Agrippa's famous simile of the human body (applied to the 'body politic'),[3] the belly is given the central position of dignity as the principal centre of supply for the whole body. There is, however, some doubt as to whether the Greek word *koilia* (=belly) may not be a mistranslation for an Aramaic word meaning 'fountain' (*me'in*=belly, *ma'yan* =fountain). The Mishnah speaks of one who devotes himself to the study of the Law as made 'like to a never-failing spring, and like to a river that flows ever more mightily; and

[1] Cf. A. Edersheim, *The Temple Ministry and its Services*, p. 241. On the details of the ritual of the Feast of Tabernacles see Mishnah, *Sukkah* (Danby's Tr., pp. 172ff.; esp. p. 179).

[2] SB II. 490f.

[3] Livy II. 32.

he becomes modest, long-suffering, and forgiving of insult; and it magnifies and exalts him above all things'.[1] Also a rabbinical comment on Prov. v. 15 (second century B.C.) reads, 'The disciple is like the well. As the well sends out living water on all sides, so from the disciple there come disciples and their disciples.'[2] On this interpretation, Jesus speaks in the same terms as the rabbi spoke of the Law.

A change in the punctuation of verse 38 is suggested by the reading of Codex Bezae, 'If any thirst let them come, and let him who believes in me drink. As the Scripture saith, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' This punctuation is confirmed by certain versions and by several Church Fathers who quote the verse. In that case *his belly* would refer to Christ, and the rivers of *living water* proceed from Him and not from the believer. Some see an echo of the verses thus understood in a letter addressed to Christians in Gaul by the Church at Lyons (A.D. 175). A certain martyr is spoken of as 'besprinkled and strengthened by the heavenly fountain of the water of life that issues from the navel of Jesus'. It is noticeable, however, that the phraseology of this quotation is adapted to the experience of the martyr. The water cools the fever of his agonies and strengthens him to bear the pain. Other changes in phraseology are evident (e.g. 'fountain' for 'rivers', 'navel' for 'belly'), which make it very doubtful indeed if the Johannine passage is in mind. On the whole, in view of the rabbinical comments, quoted above in reference to the effect of Torah study on the character and influence of the student, it seems best to retain the verses as punctuated in our Bibles. Moreover, there is an analogous conception in iv. 10-14, where the living water becomes a 'spring of water' springing up into eternal life' in the heart of the believer. In both places the conception is that the believer who has received the gift of the new life becomes a creative source of the new life to others.

That the Evangelist does not think of the individual believer as capable of exercising this full influence alone, is shown by the words of xx. 23. There the Church is the bearer of this creative spirit (see notes). Only a community by its united message, witness and impact on the world, can become the body of Christ. The *Scripture* referred to may be a com-

[1] *Aboth* vi. 1 (Danby's Tr.), p. 459.
[2] SB II. 493 (R. Akiba: died 135 A.D.).

bination of Isaiah lv. 1 and Isaiah lviii. 11. 'The living waters to the thought of the prophets (Zech. xiv. 8; Ezek. xlvii. 1) flowed from a holy *place*, viz. Jerusalem; but here they are said to flow from a holy *man*, viz. one who has believed in Christ' (Bernard).

39 *This spake he of the Spirit.* The words of Jesus are evidently spoken in reference to the water-pouring. The ceremony was also interpreted by the Jews as symbolizing the outpouring of the Spirit. The rabbinical teaching was that the Holy Spirit had departed from Israel when the last of the prophets, Zechariah and Malachi, died. They looked for a fresh outpouring in the Messianic age.

A strange variety of thoughts must have been in the minds of worshippers at this Feast. Many would see in the water-libation a prayer for rain, to fill their empty cisterns and to fertilize the ground. The pilgrim who has a long journey back to his home, would be inclined to pray that it may not come before he returns.[1] Others, more pious, would be looking forward with longing to the new Spirit of the Messianic age. To the latter, the words of Jesus would specially appeal. Yet the Spirit in the experience of the Christian believer is not merely a revival of the Spirit of bygone days. It is a new thing, the Spirit of Jesus, and according to the Johannine doctrine, the fruit of His glorification (pp. 287ff.).

(*d*) *The ecclesiastical authorities attempt to arrest Jesus, but are foiled. vv.* 40-52.

40-44 The Evangelist here displays a remarkable knowledge of the variety of popular Messianic expectation. There is division of opinion as to the genuineness of Jesus' claims. The majority opinion is in His favour, and the authorities dare not arrest Him.

45 The temple police (already in the crowd, *v.* 44) return. Even they have a strong argument against making an arrest. *Never man spake as this man.* The attitude of the crowd was

[1] One form of prayer offered by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement is recorded as 'May it be Thy Will, O Lord, that the coming year be both rainy and warm . . . heed not the prayer of the pilgrims' (or travellers; i.e. that there be no rain). H. Loewe, *Judaism and Christianity* I. 129.

too divided and might be too dangerous had they done so. 49 *This multitude which knoweth not the law are accursed* is the petulant outburst of the Pharisees, who are annoyed that a lawless and irreligious multitude should thwart their endeavours to preserve the Law by arresting Jesus. No words could more clearly reveal the gulf between official religion and the common people. 50, 51 Nicodemus suggests pointedly that his colleagues are not obeying the spirit of the Law (Deut. i. 16) in a sentence he might have learned from Jesus Himself.[1] In spite of the ecclesiastical authorities, Jesus has already made an impression, not only on some of the 'accursed' crowd, but within the Sanhedrin itself. This impression created a problem for Caiaphas and his followers (p. 313).

The Woman taken in Adultery. vii. 53–viii. 11.

This section is introduced here in order to fill a hiatus in the manuscript (cf. p. 81). It is universally admitted that the passage does not originally belong to this gospel. Its introduction may have been suggested in order to serve as an illustration of the idea of Jesus as Judge (viii. 15-18).

5 The story bears in itself all the marks of authenticity. The accusers are not interested in the woman for her own sake. They have heartlessly produced her in order to test the loyalty of Jesus to the Mosaic Law (*vv.* 5f.). 6 Jesus is sitting, when He stoops to write *with His finger on the ground.* (The words *as though he heard them not* (A.V.) are the interpretation of some still later scribe, but show deep insight.) The marks He made were meaningless. *Stooped down* ought to be 'hung his head', moved by a deep sense of shame that religious leaders should behave so heartlessly. 7, 8 In reply to their godless insistence He 'lifts up his head' (not *himself*, A.V.), and said, *He that is without sin . . . first stone.* 9 One by one, the accusers disappear.[2] *Jesus was left alone and the woman standing in the midst.* The swift stab at their

[1] It is probable that the Nicodemus interview in chapter iii actually belongs to a time during the closing days at Jerusalem.

[2] In the stoning, it was the duty of the witnesses for the prosecution to cast the first stones. (Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* vi. 4 (Danby), pp. 389ff.)

consciences has wrought His purpose. 10 He lifts up His head again. Still sitting as any other rabbi would when he gave his verdict, He pronounces judgment. His judgment is not one of condemnation, but of liberation. We may be sure that if this is the first occasion on which He met this woman, it is not the last. 11 The words, *Go, and sin no more* are a charter of freedom to break with the old life. His friendship and her former life are irreconcilable.

4. A Series of Controversies. viii. 12-59.
   (*a*) 'I am the light of the world.' *vv.* 12-20.
   (*b*) 'Whither I go, ye cannot come.' *vv.* 21-30.
   (*c*) 'The truth shall make you free.' *vv.* 31-50.
   (*d*) 'Before Abraham was, I am.' *vv.* 51-59.

(*a*) *'I am the light of the world.' vv.* 12-20.

12 The key-word to the section is *Light* (cf. i. 4-9; iii. 19-21; ix. 5; xii. 35-46; 1 John i. 5-7; ii. 8-10; also p. 12). 'Light' like 'Life' in this gospel always has a moral content. Numerous as are the verbal parallels to the use of the word in Hellenistic religious documents, the content is different.[1] The basis of the Johannine conception of Light is Jewish. Apart from the canonical Old Testament, the Johannine idea is well illustrated by later rabbinical thought, where God is spoken of as the 'Light of the World'. A comment on Ps. xviii. 28 reads, 'Thou art the illuminator of the world, and light dwells with Thee' (cf. Is. lx. 19). The same midrash also points out that the seven lamps which Aaron sets up give light *in front of* the great candlestick (Num. viii. 2f.), and interprets thus. 'Not as though I needed your light, rather shall ye give light before me (i.e. in My presence), as I have lightened, i.e. illuminated, you. The nation thus illuminated is made glorious before all nations, that these may say, "See how Israel gives light before Him who gives light to all."'[2]

12 In the Old Testament the Law and the Temple are spoken

[1] In the Hellenistic document known as *Poimandres*, God is spoken of as both 'Light' and 'Life'. The conjunction at once suggests such a passage as Ps. xxxvi. 9, and the Creation story in Genesis. There is good reason to think that the author of *Poimandres* is influenced by Hebrew thought. Cf. C. H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks*, p. 136. See also Odeberg *FG*, pp. 288f.

[2] Odeberg *FG*, pp. 286ff.

of as 'Light' (Prov. vi. 23; Ps. cxix. 105; Is. ii. 5). The great rabbis as interpreters of the Law were also called 'Lights' of Israel. The moral significance of Light is seen in Prov. iv. 18. The 'light of Thy countenance' is the light of God's righteous approval (Ps. iv. 6). Light is conjoined with Life in Ps. xxxvi. 9: 'With thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light.'

Light in Hebrew thought is also regarded as a synonym for 'salvation', with its accompaniments of joy and healing (cf. Enoch xcvi. 3). There exists a *targum* or interpretative translation of Is. lx. 1, which reads 'Arise, shine clearly, Jerusalem, for the time of thy salvation is come'. The term 'light of the Messiah' is also found, and denotes the 'light' with which the Messiah will lighten the righteous when he comes. This 'light of Messiah' is also interpreted as the original light at Creation, which, it is said, God ultimately withdrew, in order to keep it for the righteous. The words of 2 Cor. iv. 6 are both an illustration of, and a sharp contrast with such a conception.

Turning to Hellenistic religion, we find that 'light' often occurs in the vocabulary of the Mystery-religions. God is essentially light, and the vision of God at initiation makes the initiate also 'light', 'lightens' him (*phōtizein*). The conception is semi-physical. This semi-physical conception is not found in the Johannine writings.[1] The light of the Hermetic and Mystery religions is a Divine light which transforms the worshipper. It is the light of 'knowledge' (*gnōsis*). There is no real community of meaning with the Johannine conception, although no doubt John is aware of the other, and has it in view. The Hellenistic 'light' helps, gladdens, blesses, but with what? With an assurance of deliverance by a gift of immortality to deified persons from the constant ills of life. These can no longer touch the initiate. The Johannine victory over the world, through the gift of life or

[1] Dr. E. F. Scott (*Fourth Gospel*, p. 258) speaks of the Johannine conception of 'life' as semi-physical. In Jewish mysticism celestial beings possess a body of 'light' or 'glory'; but that body is distinct from the terrestrial body (1 Cor. xv. 40). The thinking may be concrete, but the body of light is distinct in substance from the earthly body. Semi-physical is thus a misnomer (cf. Odeberg *FG*, p. 68 and p. 62 *supra*).

light, is something quite different. Immunity from suffering and death are not promised (xvi. 2, 20).

Philo's Divine light has a moral content, when applied to God; but the action of this light is described in terms of Greek philosophy, and it functions in a non-moral way. God is the 'spiritual Sun' before whom the darkness of passion and evil is dispersed. 'For as when the sun arises, the darkness disappears and all places are filled with light, so in the same manner when God, that sun only to be seen by the spiritual understanding,[1] arises and shines upon the soul, the whole darkness of vices and passions is dissipated, and the pure and lovely appearance of bright and radiant virtue is displayed to the world."[2] Philo's thought may have contributed forms of expression in the synagogues of the Diaspora in the Ephesian region, but there is nothing in it to correspond to the moral content of the Johannine conception of Light. At the same time the Evangelist may have encountered the conjunction of Logos and Light in these synagogues. John thinks not of 'evil' but of the evil man' as 'loving darkness rather than the light, because his deeds are evil' (iii. 19-21). His eyes are blinded by unbelief. The impact of the Divine Light, of Jesus as 'the Light of the World', on men is personal, because He is Himself the Light. At the same time, Philo is contemptuous of the Mystery-cults although he may frequently use their terminology for his own purpose.[3]

13, 14 Light is self-witnessing. Jesus is the Light. He has come from heaven, and witnesses to what He has seen and heard (iii. 32). The Pharisees arguing on the basis of the Law and its regulations about 'witnesses', say that all witness must be corroborated (*v.* 17). In *v.* 31 Jesus allows that 'self-witness' is not valid in the Pharisaic sense, but points out that the corroboration of His own self-witness does not come from man, but from God (*v.* 32. See notes). Thus the apparent contradiction with verse 14 is removed. *I know*

[1] Philo's word for 'spiritual understanding' is *nous*. *Nous* is really the divine element in man, the impress of the *logos* implanted in him by God. It is distinct from sense-perception. It is not an attainment in the religious life, but an original endowment. (Kennedy *PCR*, p. 186.)

[2] *De Humanitate*, 22.

[3] *De Specialibus Legibus* I. 319, Loeb VII, p. 285; cf. Kennedy *PCR*, p. 220.

whence I came, and whither I go. His claim is not the utterance of a fanatic. His origin is hidden from the eyes of the Pharisees. 15 They *judge after the flesh,* i.e. they are arguing on the basis of the legal regulation about witnesses laid down in the Law (Deut. xvii. 6, etc.). *I judge no man:* i.e. after the Pharisaic method. To men who do not know God as Father (*v.* 19), or do not wish to know God as He works in Christ's ministry (e.g. in His mission to publicans and sinners) the witness of Jesus is uncorroborated. Underlying the somewhat rabbinical form of argument, there lies a profound truth. Testimony to what Jesus claims to be is not obtained by logical reasoning. As well try to prove that light shines! It is a matter of experience, and 'the Pharisees had no such experience of following Christ and saw no reason for making the experiment' (Temple). 16 *Yea and if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone.* The result of Christ's mission on earth was actually to *judge* men; to expose evil, so that it either flees from His sight or is overcome by Him. 18 *The Father that sent me beareth witness of me.* The stories told of Jesus as bringing healing and forgiveness, bear witness to the Father's presence with Him. 19 Everything depends on the tone and spirit behind the question, *Where is thy Father?* in determining the answer that is given. Compare xiv. 8f. and notes.

20 Here occurs one of those unexpected notes of locality which occur in this gospel. The preceding dialogue tends to move in a rather rarified Johannine atmosphere. The note of place, *These words spake he in the treasury* would indicate that the Evangelist is making use of some definite tradition of a dialogue between Jesus and the Pharisees, and interpreting it in his own idiom.

(*b*) *'Whither I go, ye cannot come.' vv.* 21-30.

21 The words, *Whither I go, ye cannot come,* form the theme of this section. Jesus' death is interpreted, as always in this gospel, as His going to the Father, His work on earth accomplished. 23 He is *not of this world.* He lives in that heavenly world, to which He came to introduce men, and possesses, by the gift of God, even here the power to enable

men *to become children of God* (i. 12). Their sins are forgiven, and even now they can live the life of victory over the world. 24 *Ye shall die in your sins.* The words are words of condemnation, but the tone changes as compared with the last section. Occasionally in this gospel we feel as though merely the impression is conveyed that Jesus has the last word in an argument. Not so here. The Saviour of the world speaks as one who is faced not solely with opposition, but with the tragic and terrible fact that men can be blind to the Truth. Compare, *They perceived not that he spake to them of the Father* (R.V. *v.* 27). 22 When He speaks of His death, they even mock Him. *Will he kill himself?* (see below). 25 The rendering of the R.V. margin should be taken, *How is it that I even speak to you at all?* Thus translated, the words convey a mood of yearning impatience. These men are blind to the Divine motive of love that governs His whole personal dealing with them. Yet the situation is not hopeless. The knowledge that His appeal to them is given in words of God Himself, the Father, may dawn when He has been crucified at their hands. 28 Their own guilty act will become the means of His lifting up, when He will 'draw all men' unto Himself (xii. 32). *Then shall ye know that I am* (*he*). 'He' is best omitted. Jesus here speaks in the accent of Divinity (pp. 19f.). His crucifixion at their hands will, after the Resurrection, show that He has the right to speak as only God can speak. 29 This will be the sign that even then the Father has not deserted Him—*hath not left me alone* (cf. Mark xv. 34). The realism of the cry, 'Why hast thou forsaken me?' in the Johannine thought, is submerged in the triumphant sense of oneness of purpose with God and of a victory in which all will share. 30 *Many believed on him,* or 'in him'. Active faith in a person is meant. Compare note on *v.* 31. *Believe in his name* is a more definite description of true faith (cf. p. 39).

In verse 22, the taunt *Will he kill himself?* may be a mocking suggestion that Jesus sought to imitate the example of Samson (Judges xvi. 28-30) or the hero Razis (2 Maccabees xiv. 37ff.), both of whom committed suicide when their enemies were too strong for them, and were acclaimed as national heroes. On the other

hand, there may be a reference to the Stoic permission of suicide, when God so willed it by making life impossible (p. 59). Epictetus says: 'If you can no longer endure life, leave it; but remember in doing so to withdraw quietly and not at a run. When God shall give you the signal, and release you from this service, then go to Him; but for the present endure to dwell in this place where He hath set you' (*Diss.* i. 9). The objector to the Christian doctrine of the death of Jesus as a Divine redemption from sin, might urge that Jesus was only, in a fashion, obeying the Stoic principle. One can readily see how the doctrine that He laid down His life 'of Himself' would be exposed to such objections from subtle minds. The reply of *v.* 23 would be to the point. The speakers by their taunts only show that they belong to *this world*. They are *from beneath*. They do not understand that the voluntary death of Jesus is the carrying out of a great Divine purpose. *This commandment have I received of my Father* (x. 18).

(*c*) *'The Truth shall make you free.' vv.* 31-50.

31 The controversy centres round the idea of freedom. Those addressed are certain Jews who had *believed him* (R.V.). The distinction from those who 'believe on Him' (*v.* 30) is to be noted. How can it be conceived that to 'believers' Jesus could address words such as those of verse 44? Or that believers should wish to take his life? (*v.* 40). The opening words are meant to invite and not to antagonize. These men have been impressed by Jesus' words, yet they are not among those who have *believed on Him*; i.e. those whose faith includes personal and whole-hearted trust, and a willingness to obey. A true believer must make the words of Jesus, as it were, his home. *If ye abide in my word then are ye truly my disciples.* Here we see very clearly how faith in this gospel goes far beyond intellectual assent, and involves a strenuous moral demand and absolute trust. These men accept His statements as true, but will go no further. Are they of the same type as the Judaizing Christians who dogged Paul's footsteps, against whom he strives in Galatians? These insisted that a Gentile convert must first accept the demands of the Jewish Law, before he could become a Christian convert (Gal. i. 6-8; *v.* 2). The Law which they regarded as indispensable for Gentiles, they regarded as still a basic and absolute code of morality, which no recorded word of Jesus abrogates.

Evidently they were ignorant of His teaching and of the sovereignty of the new commandment of love, whereby He interpreted, selected, or rejected its precepts, according as His interpretation of God's will demanded. 32-34 That some such type of Jewish Christian is in the Evangelist's mind, whose prototype is to be found in those Jews who only *believed him*, is rendered probable by the words, *ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*. A midrash on Exod. xxxii. 16 thus interprets it: 'Read not *charuth* (='graven'), but *cheruth* (='freedom'); for thou wilt find no freeman but him who is occupied in learning of the Torah.' Another saying is that the study of the Torah sets men free 'from the yoke of royalty' (i.e. anxiety caused by taxation and other burdens imposed by a foreign government) 'and from the yoke of worldly care'.[1] Compare Matt. xi. 28ff. (where 'rest' corresponds to the freedom of the 'truth') and Matt. vi. 25-34. 'Si la vérité était pour vous, elle combattrait pour vous, elle vaincrait pour vous; et quelques ennemis que vous eussiez, *la vérité vous en délivrerait*, selon sa promesse.'[2] Note here the Pauline language. Compare *v.* 33 and Rom. ix. 7; *v.* 34 and Rom. vi. 16-20; *v.* 35 and Gal. iv. 30; *v.* 36 and Gal. v. 1. The *freedom* Jesus speaks of is freedom from sin (*v.* 34).

There can be little doubt that the form of this passage is affected by a contemporary type of controversy between the Church and Jewish opponents, or even between parties both of whom belonged to the Christian Church, as Paul's judaizing opponents claimed. As against the contention that the tone of the dispute is foreign to the spirit and method of Jesus, we must remember that, in the Synoptic Gospels, we have few occasions on which Jesus and the ecclesiastical authorities meet in controversy within the synagogue (e.g. Luke xiv. 1-6). Let us recall also that He speaks very sternly of blasphemy against the Spirit (Matt. xii. 31). His denunciation of a certain type of contemporary Pharisaism in the long discourse of Matt. xxiii. 1-36, burns with prophetic passion. Of the divorce of religion and neighbourly love He speaks in

[1] Mishnah, *Aboth* vi. 2, iii. 5.
[2] Pascal, *Lettres Provinciales*, xvi (Ed. Stewart, p. 208).

stern condemnation (Mark xii. 40). Those who seek merely to induce men by any means to share their own religious opinions He denounces as 'children of hell' (Matt. xxiii. 15). We may come to the conclusion that some actual recorded controversy of Jesus with Jewish opponents has been transposed into a key more appropriate to later controversy between Christian and Jew; or it may be between the Church and a judaizing section within it. Yet we have no reason to think that the tone and method is foreign to the spirit of Jesus. Jesus could be endlessly patient and yet fiercely impatient where the souls of men were neglected and despised by the religious formalists of His own day. We may criticize at times Paul's tone and method in dealing with opponents, but when he speaks of them as men who 'masquerade as ministers of righteousness', he says only what is true. They follow the spirit and example of Satan who 'himself masquerades as an angel of light' (2 Cor. xi. 14. Moffatt). They are not mere charlatans but without knowing it are inspired by Satan himself (cf. 1 John iv. 1-4). They are professing Christians, whom he roundly accuses of doing the Devil's work. Jesus also could strip men of all disguises which are so easily assumed to hide an unchristian motive, and say of His opponents, *Your father is the devil.* So here John gives us the picture of men who *believe Him,* acknowledge the power of His personality and message, but are fiercely resentful when they are told that their defence of the conventional and traditional morality of the Law is inspired by sinful motives. They are deluded in thinking that even a deep concern for high morality carries with it freedom from sin. They do not *know the truth* which makes them free from sin. They are *Abraham's seed* (*v.* 33) but not *Abraham's children* (*v.* 39). Legalistic religion does not emancipate. It hardens the sinner and enslaves the soul of the legalist. Some men are not conscious of the true source of their sleepless energy and tenacious conviction in matters of religion. A man may either defend orthodoxy or promote liberal views in the Church. In either case his dominant motive, hidden from himself, may be a love of power, resentment of the discomfort of changing his own hoary opinions, or concern for a party

which is but the 'expression of his larger self'.[1]

35 *The bondservant abideth not in the house for ever.* The reference is to the story of Hagar (Gen. xxi. 9). The story was allegorized in Jewish theology (cf. Gal. iv. 22; v. 1). It would be intelligible that such a reference, identifying what was claimed to be the 'true' Israel with descent from Hagar, should arouse fierce resentment. The implication is that the ancient privileges and promises given to the chosen nation are forfeited by the rejection of Jesus.

41 *We were not born of fornication.* Some interpreters here see a reference to slanders current among the Jews regarding the circumstances of the birth of Jesus.[2] This is unlikely. Apostasy from God is regarded by the prophets as 'adultery' (cf. Hosea ii. 2ff.; Is. lvii. 3f.), an idea which better fits the reply, *We have one Father, even God.*

46 *Which of you convicteth me of sin?* (R.V.) This question must be taken in connexion with the previous verse. It is not a general claim on the part of Jesus that He is sinless. On the contrary, Jesus speaks with a concrete situation in view, and repudiates the charge that the words just spoken do not express the truth. These men are *bondservants of sin.* The *truth* (i.e. His person and message) *shall make you free* (*vv.* 32, 34). The charge rebutted is the same as in Matt. xii. 31. The 'Jews' are 'speaking against the Holy Spirit' (cf. *vv.* 48, 49).

As regards the general question of the 'sinlessness' of Jesus, it should be noted that 'sinlessness' is a negative term. A better term would be 'moral supremacy'. This moral supremacy is stated positively in verse 29, *I do always the things that are pleasing to Him.* 'Sinlessness' might be taken to imply that Jesus was not subject to the assault of temptation. For Jesus there was, however, not only no inward consent to what is evil, but a positive, uninterrupted consent to the will of God. Moreover, to some kinds of temptation, His nature was impervious, inasmuch as these are

[1] Cf. J. Denney, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, pp. 333f.
[2] See *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, R. T. Herford, pp. 35ff.

the result of previous moral weakness. The Christian belief in the 'sinlessness' of Jesus is based on His unique filial consciousness. It is further supported by the fact that neither in prayer, nor in the presence of imminent death—moments when the ordinary man is peculiarly conscious of any wrong he has done, or of things left undone—there is no confession of sin on Jesus' lips. Moreover, He himself forgave sin (Mark ii. 5), which implies a consciousness free from the sense of guilt.

48 *Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil.* Satan is described in the Book of Job as cynically sceptical regarding the disinterested goodness of Job, and as jealous of his reputation with God (Job i. 9ff.). Similarly Satan is the 'adversary' of the high priest Joshua (Zech. iii. 1ff.) and accuses him of being unclean and therefore unfit to officiate as one through whom God can 'remove the iniquity of Israel'.[1] Satan is thus described as the enemy of Jewish morality and religion. Jesus is accused of being his emissary, inasmuch as He *has a devil.* Apparently anything not in accordance with Pharisaic custom or belief was regarded by these literalists as of Satanic origin (e.g. John's fasting, Matt. xi. 18=Luke vii. 33). Jesus is also called a Samaritan.[2] Their doctrine was repulsive to the strict Jew and was evidently regarded as due to Satanic influence. Origen speaks of a Samaritan, Dositheus, who 'after the times of Jesus—wished to persuade the Samaritans that he was the Christ predicted by Moses' (*Against Celsus* I. 57), and also claimed to be the 'Son of God' (*ib.* vi. 11). 49, 50 It is regarded as sufficient that Jesus should repel both epithets by saying, *I have not a devil.* He is no false prophet of the Dositheus type. *I seek not mine own glory.*

'Before Abraham was, I am.' vv. 51-59.

51 *If a man keep my word, he shall never see death* (R.V.). The word for *keep* might be translated 'observe', 'hold to', 'make his own'. *Word* (*logos*) is in the singular, and denotes

[1] G. F. Moore *JFC* I. 406f.
[2] On the Samaritan religion, see p. 149.

not only His spoken words, but Christ Himself. The command of Jesus is not only to obey but to follow Him, which means contact with His personality in many differing situations in the Gospels. The sayings taken separately sound simple, but the carrying of them out often becomes complex and difficult. The sayings and the personality must be taken as one living whole. To *keep* the *word* of Jesus is ' the observance of the whole revelation in its organic completeness ' (Westcott). By thus ' observing ' the *word* we live the life that *shall not see death*, the free moral and spiritual life of a believer who has even now ' passed from death unto life ' (cf. xvii. 6, 14; 1 John ii. 5). Even Jesus is said to keep God's word (*v.* 55), which means that He lives in the same relationship of active devotion to the Father, as the believer does to Christ. Christians are called upon to reveal Christ to their fellows, not merely to provide concrete examples of individual sayings.

The story is told of Ellen Terry that once, on the first night of a new play, she suddenly for the moment forgot her part. The playwright, who was present, records that she swiftly and brilliantly began to improvise, in complete accord with the character she was representing. A Christian to-day is called upon to make and carry out moral decisions in circumstances that have no counterpart in recorded incidents in the life of Jesus, and for which there are no explicit directions in His recorded sayings. The Christian must also improvise, but in harmony with and possessed by the Spirit of Him whom he represents. He must keep His ' word '.

52, 53 The Jewish opponents think only of death as physical death, and proceed to argue accordingly. *Abraham is dead and the prophets.* The prophetic writings were part of the Torah in Christ's day. Rabbinic thought regarded Abraham as ' perfect in all his deeds with the Lord and well-pleasing in righteousness (i.e. the precepts of the Law) all the days of his life ' (*Jubilees* xxiii. 10). The underlying assumption is that Abraham, who lived before the law was promulgated by Moses, was miraculously enabled to have the Torah revealed to him beforehand. ' He kept the law of the Most High ' (Ecclesiasticus xliv. 20, 21). ' Abraham, it was said, was thoroughly versed in both the written and the unwritten law,

and kept them both.'[1] This fantastic doctrine was based on Gen. xxvi. 5. *Art thou greater than our Father Abraham, which is dead?* 'Do you mean that one who keeps *thy* "word" is preserved from death, while Abraham who kept God's Word yet was subject to death?' *Whom makest thou thyself?* It is probable that in this controversy there is reflected a synagogue controversy on the pre-eminence of Jesus as against Abraham. The rabbinic disputation in Romans iv is based on the same assumption that Abraham perfectly kept the Law by anticipation.[2] 56 The reply of Jesus, *Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad*, means that Abraham had a vision, not of the Torah, but of the 'day of the Son of man' (Luke xvii. 22). Abraham did not set himself up as the final authority on morality and religion. His vision of things to come was not of the multifarious precepts of the Law, nor of the prophetic teachings, but of the coming of the Christ, and of His teaching and ministry. Here we have a Johannine rendering of Paul's contention that Abraham's 'righteousness' consisted in his faith, not in works (Rom. iv. 21).

57 The words in *v.* 57 should read, 'hath Abraham seen thee?' This has considerable manuscript support, and is more appropriate to the context. *Fifty years* was regarded as the age when a man might be said to be old. At this age Levites were made to retire (Num. iv. 3). So far from indicating that Jesus looked older than He actually was, the words suggest His youthfulness. The Jewish objectors interpret Jesus' reply prosaically and ironically as meaning that Abraham had actually seen one who still had his reputation to make, and was as yet undistinguished.

58 *Before Abraham was, I am.* On the pre-existence of Christ, see pp. 90ff. The saying states explicitly what is implicit in the words, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden' (Matt xi. 27f.). These words are an echo of words that are put in the mouth of Wisdom (Ecclesiasticus li. 23-27). Thus Jesus implicitly claims to speak in the name of the eternal Wisdom of God, to speak as the Logos. The

[1] Moore *JFC* I. 275f., where references are given to the Talmud.
[2] See C. H. Dodd, *Romans*, pp. 67f.

weary and the heavy-laden are those to whom the legal scribal interpretations of the Torah were oppressive. The Johannine words are a claim to know God's eternal purpose and to act as His representative (cf. i. 1-3, and see note on the 'I am' sayings in the Gospel, p. 19). Here 'I am' is to be interpreted in the light of Deut. xxxii. 39; Is. xli. 4; xliii. 10; xlviii. 12. The claim in these passages is that God shares His Divine power and place with no other. So Jesus shares His Divine place as Mediator between God and man (i. 51) with no other, not even Abraham.[1]

59 *They took up stones.* There is a lofty irony in these words. It is as though the angry waves reared themselves to put out the stars. *Jesus hid himself, and went out of the Temple.* He mysteriously escapes. There is undoubtedly a symbolic meaning. The Jews have failed to see who Jesus is, and He withdraws Himself from their eyes. (The words *going through the midst of them, and so passed by* do not belong to the text and are omitted in R.V.)

5. The Healing of the Man Born Blind. ix. 1-41.

2 The question, *Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind,* implies that the man may have sinned while yet in his mother's womb. Among the Rabbis the question was debated whether a child could be said to be guilty of sinning in its pre-natal existence, but it cannot be said that rabbinical teaching generally gave a positive answer.[2] Such rabbinical arguments are an attempt to justify the dogmatic position that suffering is always the fruit of sin. This assumption underlies the question put to Jesus about a massacre of Galileans by Pilate, and a recent fatal accident, probably at Pilate's new waterworks at Siloam (Luke

[1] A late midrash on Is. xlviii. 16 may be cited. The prophet claims authority for his words by saying, 'From the time that it was, there am I'. The midrash interprets 'From the time the Torah was given, I received this prophecy'. (Loewe, *Rabbinic Anthology*, 427; *Tanhumah*.)

[2] Rabbi Elisha b. Abija (*c.* A.D. 120) deals with the instance of a pregnant mother who enters an idol's temple, and smells a sacrifice. The odour penetrated her body like the poison of a snake. He rules that the unborn child did not sin. The mother is responsible for her child's later apostasy from the true faith. (SB II, p. 528.)

xiii. 1-5). It is to be noted that both there and here, Jesus refuses to deal with the enigma of suffering in terms of isolated problems. In the one case His answer is that doom, whether spiritual or physical, awaits all who do not repent (Luke xiii. 5). Here Jesus ignores the questions of pre-natal sin or heredity. The man's congenital blindness only provides an occasion when *the works of God should be made manifest in him.* Jesus proceeds to manifest these 'works' by healing him, neither asking nor answering questions as to the origin of his blindness. In so doing, He speaks to all who are pre-occupied with the problem of pain.

We are not at liberty to isolate even the terrible problem of the suffering of the innocent and helpless in time of war, from that presented by the spectacle of the bodies of thousands overwhelmed by an earthquake. The primary task of the Christian man is to remove, by all the means God has given, known causes of suffering; neither to solve the mystery of pain, nor curiously to speculate about it. Even though we are convinced that responsibility for nine-tenths of human suffering can be laid at our own doors, there is still an unchartered mystery of pain in a world governed by God. Pain would be no more tolerable even if we could explain it.

4 Note the 'we' of verse 4 (R.V.). Jesus identifies Himself with the work of His Church, which is His body. *The night cometh when no man can work.* The words are best interpreted, not as indicating the close of Jesus' mission, but as referring to the blindness exemplified in the enemies of Jesus.

5 For the believer it is always day; *When* ('*so long as*') *I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*

6 This is one of the few miracles of healing where Jesus is recorded to have made use of the ordinary 'technique' of the healers of His time (cf. Mark vii. 33; viii. 23). It is a very ancient belief that saliva contains and conveys something of a man's own personality. This survives in a curious way in the phrase, 'the spit of his father' (cf. 'c'est son père tout craché'). Saliva was thought to have healing properties.[1] The Evangelist interprets *Siloam* as meaning *sent.* The pool is said to be so named because the water is 'sent' or 'conducted'

[1] Hastings *ERE*, Art. 'Saliva'.

thither by an artificial shaft or aqueduct.[1] Here also the Evangelist finds a symbolic meaning. The name Siloam suggests that Jesus, as is so often stated in this Gospel, was 'sent' by God (vi. 29, etc.).

It is unnecessary to enter into this vivid story in detail. It is full of repetition, assertion and counter-assertion, after the Johannine dialogue style. Observe also that unlike most of the other stories of Jesus in the Gospels, a variety of characters is introduced. Usually in the short Synoptic tales, there are only two characters, Jesus and the person addressed. Here the Pharisees and the man's parents are introduced, and Jesus appears and reappears. There is a marked literary construction and movement of characters which is dramatic, and must be ascribed to the Evangelist. The main theme of the story is the attempt of the ecclesiastical authorities to discredit the miracle. Symbolism is also apparent. The physical miracle begins to symbolize a spiritual miracle. A man's eyes are opened, and in the end he sees who Jesus is, and believes in Him (*vv.* 36-38). The Pharisees remain blind, although they assert that they can 'see' sufficiently well to know that Jesus is a 'sinner' (*v.* 24), because He did not obey the rules of the Sabbath. There is strong emphasis on the man's own personal experience. He brushes aside the ecclesiastical question as to whether Jesus has 'sinned'; i.e. broken the law. *One thing I know that whereas I was blind now I see* (*v.* 25). New religious experiences are mighty revolutionary forces which endanger the settled ecclesiastical fabric and traditions. Therefore the man is excommunicated (*v.* 34). This story would have a particular 'survival value' in the Christian tradition in view of the experiences of Paul and the Christian Church in the synagogues of Asia Minor (cf. Luke vi. 22; also Matt. x. 17; John xii. 42; xvi. 2).

It is interesting to note the various stages in the growth of this man's experience:

(1) *vv.* 11-12. *A man that is called Jesus.* Where He is, or who He is, he does not know. He only knew His power to heal.

(2) *vv.* 13-17. *He is a prophet.* Prophets sometimes said hard things about the Sabbath and conventional interpretations of the Law (Hos. vi. 6; Is. i. 13; Jer. ii. 8; Ezek. vii. 26;

[1] G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem* I. 102ff.

Ps. li. 16). Jesus is to him a prophet because He resists legalism and formalism.

(3) *vv.* 18-23. The parents are summoned and questioned. We are told that the parents *feared the Jews* (*v.* 22). Their fear was not for themselves but for their son, and the consequences which confession of faith in Christ would mean to him. Rightly they left the ultimate decision to him. *He is of age; ask him.*

(4) *vv.* 24-27. A man put on his mettle who has had such an experience learns independence of others, and begins to put some questions, ecclesiastical and theological, in their right place. He lays the emphasis on his own experience. *One thing I know.* Theological questions about the person of Jesus do not require to be answered before men can receive what He has to give. Note that the opponents put the emphasis on the 'how' (*v.* 26). The man says, 'I know'. He boldly suggests that they become His disciples (*v.* 27); in other words face the facts for themselves.

(5) *vv.* 28-34. Personal experience gains courage to oppose traditional religious authority (*vv.* 28f.). It claims the right, not to be independent of authority, but to choose its authorities.

(6) *vv.* 35-38. The man now makes a full confession of faith in Christ. The synagogue authorities have excommunicated him (*v.* 34). The step was a serious one for him. Excommunication might be either disciplinary, i.e. for a period; or indefinite in duration. It meant loss of livelihood and the banning of social intercourse.[1] Apparently the Evangelist means us to understand that the man suffered the severest form of excommunication. He had committed the heinous sin of attempting to teach his teachers (*v.* 34). Jesus then appears and finds (Luke xv. 4) the man, as a shepherd might find his lost sheep. He finds him excommunicate and churchless and admits him a member of His flock. *Dost thou believe on the Son of Man?* (R.V.m.) (*v.* 35). The man asks for fuller knowledge (*v.* 36). Jesus reveals Himself and he makes his confession of faith and worships (*vv.* 37, 38). Westcott

[1] See Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, E.Tr. II. ii, pp. 60ff.

remarks that here is 'the beginning of the new Society'. It can scarcely be doubted that this picture is influenced by the pattern of what happened at the admission of catechumens in the later church. Compare Rom. x. 9, and also Acts viii. 37 (A.V.), which, though not a part of the original text, probably contains one of the earliest forms of baptismal profession.

6. The Parable of the Good Shepherd. x. 1-21.

The connexion is close between chapters ix and x. In ix. 34 the Man born Blind, whose eyes are opened by Jesus, is excommunicated from the Jewish Church by the authorities. Jesus encourages and receives from him full confession of faith in Himself as the 'Son of Man'. Thereby he is admitted a member of the Christian 'flock' or church. The word for 'cast out' or excommunicate is the same word in Greek as is used in x. 4. 'When he hath *put forth* all his own.' Excommunication from the '*fold*' of Judaism on the ground of personal faith in the Son of Man, is equivalent to entering into the *flock* of Jesus. The Jewish authorities are made to appear as the blind agents of God. Their action, like that of Caiaphas in xi. 49, has a significance in God's overruling purpose which they do not understand (cf. notes on ii. 21).

1-5 Verses 1-5 contain what is usually called the 'parable' of the Good Shepherd. The word in *v.* 6 is *paroimia*, and appears again in xvi. 25, 29, where it is used to mean a saying whose real significance and purpose are contained in it allusively, and need interpretation. The parables of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels are distinguished from allegories inasmuch as their effect and meaning depend on the fact that the scenery and characters are real and are true to nature and life. Each story, even though it does point a moral or illustrate a spiritual truth, can never be said to have that moralizing or didactic tendency woven into its very fibre, which often disfigures the religious story and makes the scenery and characters unreal. 'Too often treated as cryptic allegories of theological doctrines, they (the parables) have not until the other day received justice as artistic presentations of daily life

in first-century Galilee.'[1] Judged by the same standard, the description in verses 1-5 is true to life, and cannot justly be described as allegory. 'Sometimes we enjoyed our noonday rest beside one of these Judaean wells, to which three or four shepherds come down with their flocks. The flocks mixed with each other and we wondered how each shepherd would get his own again. But after the watering and the playing were over, the shepherds one by one went up different sides of the valley, and each called out his peculiar call, and the sheep of each drew out of the crowd to their own shepherd, and the flocks passed away as orderly as they came.'[2] Here the description implies a fold into which a number of different flocks might be driven at night to protect them from wild beasts or robbers, which were under the charge of a door-keeper or *porter* (*v.* 3). The latter simply belongs to the scene, and must not be interpreted as an allegorical detail.

6-18 The parable is followed, as several times also in the Synoptic Gospels, by an application to some particular situation or by an interpretation, rendered necessary by the fact that the disciples did not understand. The simplest example of an 'application' is found in Matt. vii. 24-27 (Luke vi. 47-49). In Mark iv. 14ff. there is an allegorizing interpretation of the parable of the Sower, which no doubt represents an early homiletical interpretation. It is prefaced by a very remarkable conception of the parables as belonging to the 'mystery of the Kingdom of God', which is revealed to disciples and hidden in these same parables from the unbeliever. (We have the same conception applied to the 'signs' in John xii. 37ff.) In view of Mark's rather startling preface to the interpretation of the parable of the Sower and the apparent assumption that the interpretation is a kind of esoteric doctrine intelligible only to disciples, the inference is that this and other interpretations in the Synoptic Gospels (cf. Matt. xiii. 37-43) are due either to the evangelists, or had become inseparably connected with the traditions of Christ's teaching, handed down by Christian preachers and teachers

[1] C. H. Dodd, *The Authority of the Bible*, p. 147.
[2] Smith *HGHL*, pp. 311f.

and bearing the stamp of their own experience and reflection. It need not be denied that Jesus ever interpreted His own sayings and parables to groups of disciples, but the problem of deciding between *ipsissima verba* of Jesus, and subsequent interpretation and expansion is precisely the same as presents itself for our consideration in the interpretation of the parable of the Shepherd and his sheep in verses 7-18.[1] In these verses, apart from the use of the 'I' style of speech, we have a simpler form of the interpretation of a parable than any that appears in the Synoptic Gospels. As compared with the Marcan interpretation of the parable of the Sower, there is no homiletic pressing of detail, but a series of reflections grouped around two actual and essential elements of the parable. These are the Door (*vv.* 7-10) and the Shepherd (*vv.* 11-18).

7 *I am the Door of the sheep.*[2] This utterance is further defined in *v.* 9; *By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.* The *door* is conceived as the entrance to a far wider *fold* than the Jewish Church (cf. *v.* 16). Jesus is He through whom the believer is introduced into the upper heavenly world, where the Father dwells. The saying *I am the door,* is another form of the saying, *I am the way* (xiv. 6). Underlying it also is the general conception of i. 51. The Son of Man is the ladder between heaven and earth. To the man born blind Jesus has become the *door* (ix. 35-38) into the world of light.

8 Jesus as the *Door* is suddenly contrasted in *v.* 8 with sinister personalities who are called *thieves and robbers* (cf. *v.* 10). The door, being the way of access to God, must be used by all Christian shepherds in order to carry out their ministry. They, too, must be men who have entered through the door, which is the Son of Man upon whom ascend and descend the angels of God, into the heavenly world of reality or truth.

> Themselves first training for the skies,
> They best will raise their people there.

[1] On the question of the authenticity of the interpretations of the parables in the Synoptic Gospels, see C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, pp. 18off.; W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Gospel Parables*, p. 39, note 2; B. T. D. Smith, *The Parables of the Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 127f., 196ff.

[2] The reading, *I am the Shepherd of the Sheep*, is found in one Syriac version, but is evidently an attempt at simplification of the meaning.

The words *all that came before me are thieves and robbers* (R.V.) refers to the tradition which even Israel had of false and unfaithful spiritual leaders (cf. Ezekiel xxxiv). The immediate reference is to the ecclesiastical authorities who have excommunicated the man born blind, or elsewhere appear as men who are more concerned with the preservation of the orthodox tradition than with those under their charge who need healing. Both priest and scribe come under the lash. These unspiritual shepherds are 'robbers'. We may compare Jesus' words about the scribes 'who have taken away the key of knowledge' (Luke xi. 52), have locked the door against those whose deepest need is to be brought into personal touch with the Father. The denunciation also may have reference to a contemporary situation within the Ephesian Church. In that Church there are indications in the Epistles, that there was springing up in the Evangelist's time a certain arbitrary exercise of ecclesiastical authority. We have the instance of Diotrephes, 'who loveth the pre-eminence, who refuses to welcome the brothers, checks those who want to welcome them, and excommunicates them from the church' (3 John 10). Compare also the reference to the many deceivers ('impostors') that are gone forth 'into the world' (2 John 7). These are evidently Docetists, who deny that 'Jesus Christ is come in the flesh'. The writer's somewhat fierce denunciation of them is not merely that they are unorthodox, but that their denial of the real human personality of Jesus involves that Christians are deprived of the assurance securely based on historical fact, that in the human person of the Divine Son of Man, a way is ever open for all men into the presence of God. The author of chapter xxi assumes that Peter's restoration to the pastoral office depends on his being able to answer the question sincerely '*Lovest thou me?*'

12 To these same men the term '*hireling*' is applied in verse 12. The word recalls Jesus' censure of the scribes for their 'covetousness' (Mark xii. 40; Luke xx. 47; xvi. 14). The scribes' duties were not only to educate the people in the law as part of their synagogue duties, but also to pass sentence on evil-doers in the ecclesiastical courts. It was expressly ordained that their professional work should be without

remuneration. Rabbi Hillel is quoted as saying, 'He that makes profit out of the words of the Law removes his life from the world' ('is incapable of influencing the world').[1] On the other hand, the scribes were allowed to hold property, and were encouraged to engage in trade that they might have a means of livelihood. It is obvious that the temptation to become absorbed in secular business might become too strong. There are express warnings given against a one-sided devotion to secular business in rabbinical utterances. Read the vivid passage in Ecclesiasticus xxxviii. 24-39.[2]

11 *I am the Good Shepherd.* The Greek word for *good* is *kalos*, which suggests the idea of 'beautiful' as well as that which is 'fitting', or of a person, 'competent'. This shepherd's qualities in every way fit him for his office, inasmuch as He and His work are one harmonious whole. The idea of Moses or David, as Divinely appointed Shepherds, and of Israel as God's 'flock', are familiar in the Old Testament. Other great spiritual personalities are spoken of as shepherds (e.g. Num. xxvii. 16f.). In the Psalms of Solomon xvii. 40f., the Messiah is spoken of as 'mighty in deed and strong in the fear of God, who guards the flock of the Lord in truth and righteousness. He suffers it not that any of them stray on the pasture-ground. He leads them all by straight paths.' The conception of Jesus as the Good Shepherd is often interpreted too sentimentally. Pretty things are said about sheep and shepherds. The biblical pastoral scene always suggests danger to the sheep, and a shepherd armed to meet it (Ps. xxiii. 4).

12 The Good Shepherd is set in contrast with the *hireling . . . whose own the sheep are not.* The former *layeth down his life for the sheep* (*v.* 11). In the Mishnah, elaborate directions are given regarding the *legal* responsibility of the hireling shepherd for losses incurred through the depredations of wild animals and brigands. He is held responsible if the beast was lost or stolen, but is absolved from responsibility when an armed brigand appears whom he cannot

[1] Mishnah, *Aboth* iv. 5 (Danby).

[2] Cf. Schürer, *History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, E.Tr. II. i, pp. 317f.

withstand. If one wolf attacks the flock he is bound to resist it, but if there are two, the damage may be regarded as 'unavoidable accident'.[1] In contrast the Good Shepherd will lay down his life for the sheep under all circumstances. Compare verses 28, 29. *They shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.* Jesus exercises the Father's power of salvation for all. *My Father which hath given them unto me, is greater than all* (i.e. all possible dangers threatening the flock); *and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*

This conception of the Good Shepherd is deeply rooted in Old Testament piety. Israel is the flock of God (Is. xl. 11; Jer. xxiii. 1-4; Ps. lxxiv. 1; xcv. 7). Sometimes it is said to be in the hands of unfaithful shepherds (Ezek. xxxiv; Jer. ii. 8 R.V.m.; Zech. xi. 3-9). Salvation will come to the flock by David, the true shepherd of Israel (Ezek. xxxvii. 24), or by a descendant of his (Jer. xxiii. 5f.). The conception of Jesus as the Shepherd of the people finds expression in His own consciousness of His mission. His attitude towards them is one of compassion, 'as sheep not having a shepherd' (Mark vi. 34). The shepherd rôle finds a central place in His own Messianic self-consciousness (Mark xiv. 27), and appears in one of His most tender sayings to the small band of disciples (Luke xii. 32). The way of the shepherd with his sheep, He uses to describe His own ministry (Luke xv. 3-7). How deeply the conception had taken root in the liturgical forms of the earliest church, is shown by the description of Him as 'that great Shepherd of the sheep' in the benediction of Heb. xiii. 20f. (cf. 1 Pet. ii. 25). The deep responsibility of the pastoral office in the early church as one delegated by God Himself, appears in Acts xx. 28; Ephes. iv. 11; and particularly 1 Pet. v. 2-4.

15 *I lay down my life for the sheep.* His death is no mere tragic accident such as might befall a faithful servant at the hands of brigands. Compare *v.* 18, where the words *I have power* are better translated as in R.V. margin, *I have a right to lay it down, and I have a right to take it again.* In the New

[1] Mishnah, *Baba Metzia* vii. 8, 9 (Danby's trans., p. 360); cf. Odeberg *FG* 317, n. 2.

Testament Jesus is never represented as rising again by His own power. The power is the power of God. He gives His life unreservedly and voluntarily into the Father's hand. In virtue of that voluntary submission to the Father's will, He has the right to submit Himself to death, and the right to receive His life again; to be *with the Father*, and to be the eternal Giver of Life (cf. notes on vi. 60-63). 16 *There shall be one flock, one shepherd* (R.V.). The A.V. translates 'one fold'. Of this rendering Westcott remarks that 'it has been most disastrous in idea and influence'. It has distorted popular ecclesiastical ideas about church union. The translation was adopted in spite of the fact that the word translated 'fold' is a different word from that rendered 'fold' in the earlier part of the verse, and is the usual Greek word for 'flock'. Flock implies that the basis of Christian fellowship lies in a common relationship to one Lord or 'Shepherd'. External union is the fruit of a common obedience to that same Lord; not because He said anything directly on the subject, but because a particular situation (at home or on the mission field) indicates that denominational differences, having accomplished their divine purpose, may degenerate into competitive rivalries, and become a hindrance to the universal mission of the Church (see notes on xvii. 21). 18 *This commandment have I received of my Father.* These words should be understood in reference to Mark viii. 31, *The Son of man must suffer.* 'Must' indicates not a blind, but a 'seeing' necessity, and means as here, voluntary fulfilment of the sovereign purpose of God.

7. Discourse and Controversy at the Feast of Dedication. x. 19-42.

22-30 *It was the feast of the dedication.* It is quite usual for this Evangelist suddenly to insert a note of place and time into the middle of a discourse (e.g. vi. 59-61). The note may be regarded as an historical attachment of the raw material out of which the chapter is constructed. It attracted him because it contained certain features that lent themselves to symbolism. The Feast of Dedication took place in the month *Kislev* (November-December). It was originally in-

stituted to commemorate the purification of the Temple from the pollutions of Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Macc. iv. 36, 39). The feast is closely connected in Jewish thought with the Feast of Tabernacles. The ceremonial of both feasts was distinguished by the use of lights (2 Macc. x. 6). The Evangelist has already made use of the lights to introduce the saying *I am the Light of the World* (viii. 12; ix. 5). Here he makes use of another feature of the ceremonial of the Feast of Dedication. The altar was rededicated. Here Jesus dedicates Himself to death (*v.* 36). *It was winter and Jesus was walking in the Temple in Solomon's porch. The Jews therefore came round about Him* (*vv.* 23f.). The scene is regarded as a symbolic picture of Jewish hostility, manifesting itself in the Temple, the very centre of Jewish religion. The pressing around Him of the Jews is not mere eagerness to hear His answer to their question (*v.* 24), but the manifestation of their hostile intentions. It was indeed *winter*, a display of cold and implacable enmity. Yet, in spite of all these men may do, the Shepherd's own sheep are safe, He and they are both in the *Father's hand* (*v.* 29). *I and the Father are one* (*v.* 30), literally ' one thing '. The unity is a unity of invincible Divine purpose, which is to be shared by the flock, the church of God (see note on xvii. 22).

31-39 The Jews seek to stone Him for blasphemy in thus identifying His own mission and teaching with the Divine purpose. *Thou makest thyself God* (*v.* 33). The argument that follows is rabbinical. Although Jesus did argue in rabbinical fashion (p. 175), it is probable that, imposed on the actual controversy, we have an element of Christian midrash, developed in controversy between the Christian Church and the Jewish Synagogue regarding the Divine Person of Jesus. Note the phrase *your law* (*v.* 34). The Old Testament is quoted in proof that the ascription of Divine prerogatives to a human personality is not blasphemous (*vv.* 34-36). In Ps. lxxxii. 6, the judges spoken of are judges, who are behaving unjustly, and are reminded that they are *elōhim* (' gods '); delegates of God, who share the Divine prerogative of dispensing justice. ' God ' is applied also in this sense to Moses (Exod. vii. 1); cf. Exod. xxii. 28 (A.V. and R.V. margins);

Deut. i. 17; xix. 17. To these *the word of God came.* Jesus is one whom the Father 'consecrated' *and sent into the world.* Jesus, in His own person and ministry, completely utters the whole 'Word of God'. He is the 'Logos made flesh' (cf. Heb. i. 1). The unique sonship of Jesus is made known by His 'works', which include both words and deeds (*v.* 37). They are *the works of my Father* (cf. v. 36; x. 25; and Matt. xi. 4-6).

40-42 Jesus retires for safety beyond Jordan to Perea, to *the place where John was at first baptizing* (i. 28). The mention of this journey is evidently made for the sake of the information contained in *vv.* 41f. The subordinate place of the Baptist as compared with Jesus recurs in the writer's thought. Here we have the testimony of the success of Jesus' mission at the very spot where the Baptist inaugurated his. The work of the Baptist was accompanied by no signs or miracles.

8. The Raising of Lazarus; Jesus the Life-giver and Conqueror of Death. xi. 1-44.

The story is cast in a series of Scenes:

Scene I (*vv.* 1-6). The arrival of the news of Lazarus' serious illness, and Jesus' delay after the summons.

Scene II (*vv.* 7-16). The disciples attempt to dissuade Jesus from going to Bethany on account of the danger to His life.

Scene III (*vv.* 17-32). The arrival of Jesus, and His meeting with Martha and Mary.

Scene IV (*vv.* 33-44). The approach to the tomb, the emotion of Jesus, and the miracle of resurrection.

1-6 Lazarus is described in *v.* 1 as *a certain man,* who belonged to the same village as Martha and Mary. In *v.* 2 he is stated to be their brother, and there is also a forward reference to the story of Mary's anointing in chapter xii. Later on in the narrative Lazarus is spoken of as the brother of Martha and Mary (*vv.* 19, 21, 23, 32). Moreover, the Evangelist is evidently desirous of assigning a motive for Mary's

act in xii. 1-3, which he closely relates to the raising of Lazarus from the dead. The awkwardness of verse 2 has led some critics to regard it as editorial. A more likely supposition is that the Evangelist is making use of some written source describing certain events in Bethany, the raising of a man called Lazarus from the dead, and the anointing. He wishes closely to relate the two incidents, and does so by assuming that Lazarus was thus related to the sisters, although his source did not expressly say so. He regards the Lazarus story as the event that ultimately led to decisive hostile action on the part of the authorities (xi. 45, 46; cf. xii. 9-11). This place is occupied in the Synoptic Gospels by the Cleansing of the Temple, which he introduces at a much earlier stage.

Close attention should be directed to the delay of Jesus in answering the urgent summons (*v.* 6). The mention of this delay is also remarkable as following immediately on the statement in *v.* 5. What is in the Evangelist's mind?

(1) One interpretation is that Jesus is represented as delaying His departure for two days, in order that He might work the supreme miracle of raising Lazarus from the grave. One feels instinctively that any such explanation is much too crude even for a writer whose conception of Jesus is so theological. Heitmüller[1] accepts this interpretation, and passes on it a judgment that is inevitable. It would involve 'an attitude of aggressive callousness which would appear to us, if we are compelled to attribute such words and action to Jesus, unbearable'. If the Evangelist's motive were so abstractly theological, it is strange that he should go out of his way to emphasize the bonds of intimate affection that united Jesus with the family at Bethany, as though he himself were defending Jesus against a charge of heartlessness.

(2) The juxtaposition of verses 5 and 6 must be regarded as deliberate. They can be properly interpreted only in the light of the Evangelist's general conception of Jesus' entire freedom from all external compulsion, physical or arising from human relationships, in His approach to the Cross. Deeply as He loved the family at Bethany, it must not be only in response to their need that He journeys to Bethany,

[1] *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments* IV, pp. 125f.

which was 'nigh unto Jerusalem', where enemies were waiting to take His life.

In this connexion it should be noted that there are two other occasions in the Gospel where Jesus is represented as retaining the complete initiative, when a decisive step is suggested to Him by others who put forward a human claim to determine His action. These occasions appear in ii. 3-5 and vii. 3, 10.

(*a*) These three occasions have one outstanding feature in common. In all three, the suggestion as to the course of action which Jesus should take comes from those who are either closely related to Him by family ties or, as here, by bonds of deep affection. In ii. 3, the mother of Jesus is represented as suggesting to Him that He should, evidently miraculously, provide wine when the supply had failed, thus inaugurating His ministry (ii. 11). In vii. 3, His 'brethren' urge Jesus to make a public declaration of Messiahship in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles. In xi. 3, the urgent message from the household in Bethany is a summons to proceed at once to the sick-bed of His friend.

(*b*) In all three cases Jesus in the end actually does what is suggested. In ii. 4, 5, only after His mother has acknowledged that the initiative belongs to her Son alone; in vii. 6-10, after the suggestion of a public manifestation has been rejected, Jesus, after delay (*v.* 9), goes up to the feast *incognito* (see notes); in xi. 7, after a delay expressly stated as two days. In each case a decisive act is in question which must therefore be undertaken only as Jesus Himself determines the moment for action, in free obedience to the sovereign will of God (vii. 6). He must walk *in the day* (xi. 9), i.e. with a clear and full conviction of God's will. The delay owing to refusal to act on a merely human initiative, means that Jesus must wait until the will of the Father is made known to Him by some mysterious inward intimation. This is in accordance with the Evangelist's whole conception of the consciousness of Jesus. *The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing* (v. 19). In the Lazarus story, Jesus delays, until He is assured that it is the will of God

that He should now set His face towards Jerusalem for the last time, to seek a judgment of Himself and His claims at the hands of the supreme ecclesiastical tribunal of His own people. To go to Bethany, so near Jerusalem, is to court arrest and death.

(*c*) The narrative of xi. 1-6 preserves that human element of temptation, both to anticipate and later (*vv.* 7, 8) to be turned aside from the Divine purpose which governed His supreme act of sacrifice, even by the dictates of compassion or consideration for the weakness, suffering, or blindness of His disciples. Hence the reason that the Evangelist emphasizes so strongly the very human ties that bound Jesus to the Bethany household. So far from suggesting an 'aggressive callousness' on Jesus' part to human claims, he does precisely the opposite. He indicates that Jesus felt these claims strongly, but saw them only in the light of the supreme act of His vocation as Saviour of the world. In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus, who rejoiced in companionship and friendship and in the special friendship of a few, also shows a detachment from human relationships, even the most intimate, and their claims, when these conflicted with His Divine call to men, 'Come, follow me' (Matt. x. 37). The reply of Jesus to His mother in ii. 4, and to His brethren in vii. 6, recalls His words in Matt. xii. 48. This aspect of the self-consciousness of Jesus has been vividly interpreted by John. This Evangelist consistently represents Jesus' attitude towards the sacrifice which God intended to crown His mission on earth as one of complete autonomy. *I lay down my life of myself. No man taketh it from me.* Yet God alone determines the hour (xiii. 1, xvii. 1). Not even a friend's need 'taketh it from Him' (cf. Matt. viii. 21f.).

The sickness of Lazarus is for the *glory of God, that the Son of Man may be glorified thereby* (*v.* 4). The words, *this sickness is not unto death,* do not mean that Lazarus will not die. They can only mean that the illness of Lazarus issuing in death, and the summons to Bethany which Jesus ultimately obeys, will be the occasion for a signal manifestation of God's power. Lazarus will be raised to life, and the Son of Man

will be *glorified* through His own voluntary submission to death (see p. 106; cf. viii. 54). Both His journey to Bethany and the miracle will lead immediately to His arrest and crucifixion. Compare the 'voice from heaven', xii. 28.

7-16 *Let us go into Judaea again.* The disciples endeavour to deter Him, and He replies in the words of *vv.* 9f. It is to be noted that the attempt to dissuade Jesus from submitting to death, voiced by Peter (Mark viii. 31-33; cf. Mark ix. 32) appears in somewhat different form in this Gospel. Here the ground of discussion is concrete, and is based on actual experience of hostility on another occasion on the part of the authorities. *The Jews were but now seeking to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?* (cf. viii. 59; x. 31). In the Marcan story, Peter is rebuked because he cannot in general associate a shameful death with Messiahship (Mark viii. 31-33; Mark ix. 32). The Johannine account is less theological and more realistic. To *walk in the day* (*v.* 9) is to walk in the light of God's revealed will. Death can only come to Him when God so ordains (cf. pp. 230f.). *Are there not twelve hours in the day?* The Jewish day, as distinct from night, began with sunrise and ended at sunset. The full day of twenty-four hours was reckoned from sunset to sunset. The duration of the hours of light would vary according to the season, actually from 14 hours 12 minutes to 9 hours 48 minutes. Notwithstanding, the actual time of daylight was always regarded as twelve hours, varying in length. In the height of summer the hour would be about twenty minutes longer than in the depth of winter. The proverbial utterance, *Are there not twelve hours in the day?* means that the length of a day or an hour is in God's hand. As they go Jesus mysteriously receives intimation of Lazarus' death (*v.* 11). He *sleeps* and Jesus goes to *awaken him out of sleep.* As often in this Gospel, the disciples misunderstand (*v.* 13). Jesus makes His meaning plain (*v.* 14). We may compare His words in Mark v. 39, and their reception with scorn. The meaning of *sleep* as a synonym for death in both cases is that death is to Jesus a sleep from which He has power to awaken the sleeper. Here the meaning is also that death, whether conceived physically or spiritually, is unawareness of the real spiritual world, of

which the gates can be thrown open only through Him who is the *Door* (cf. pp. 6ff.). For the alternation of meaning between the physical and the spiritual conception of death, we may compare v. 24f. and v. 28f. (cf. also Matt. viii. 22; Luke ix. 60; Luke xv. 24, 32). Just as the healing of the man born blind is not merely the story of a physical cure, but clearly symbolizes the giving of sight and light to the spiritually blind, so the raising of Lazarus also symbolizes the raising of the spiritually dead (cf. *vv.* 25, 26). It is intended to quicken the faith of the disciples (*v.* 15). Yet in no mood of expectant faith, but in a kind of loyal despair the disciples are urged by Thomas to share their Master's fate (*v.* 16).

17-32 Lazarus had been in the tomb *four days already*. The *four days* are meant to stress the fact that Lazarus had been dead more than three days. According to certain later forms of Jewish belief, the soul is regarded as having finally left the body after three days. 'The mourning reaches its climax on the third day. For three days, the soul returns to the grave, thinking it may be able to return to the body. But if it sees that the fashion of its face has changed, then it departs and forsakes it.'[1] The conception that the mourning[2] reaches its height on the fourth day implies that all hope of any restoration to life by what might be called natural means, is banished. Restoration can only be accomplished by a new creative act of God. Such a creative act, Jesus is represented as accomplishing.

In the Johannine version of the 'Bethany' tradition, the characters of the two sisters assume different aspects, as compared with the Lucan version (*v.* 20; cf. Luke x. 38). Martha on this occasion is almost statuesque in her calmness. Mary is consumed with grief and distracted. Both sisters greet Jesus with the words, '*If thou hadst been here my brother had not died*' (*vv.* 21, 32), but Martha's words in *v.* 22 show that she had faith that Jesus will work a miracle. Mary continues *weeping* (rather 'wailing') to the last moment (*vv.* 31, 33). Martha who, in Luke's story, can be so upset

[1] Quoted SB II, p. 544. The passage, in which Job xiv. 22 is cited, is not earlier than A.D. 220, but, as often in rabbinical writings, may quite well represent earlier conceptions. Cf. Moore *JFC* II. 292ff.

[2] For a picture of Jewish mourning see 2 Esdras ix. 38-41; x. 1-4.

by the sudden and unexpected demands of everyday life, and tries to celebrate the great occasion of a visit from 'the Master', by a specially prepared feast, yet meets this supreme crisis in the family life with a collectedness which controls her grief. The words of Jesus, *Thy brother shall rise again* (*v.* 23) are regarded by her as little more than conventional comfort (*v.* 24). The mourners who came would bring just such words of comfort, but Martha had already left them. She receives Jesus' interpretation of them (*vv.* 25ff.) with eager faith. *Yea, Lord, I do believe . . . cometh into the world* (*v.* 27).

I am the resurrection and the life (*v.* 25). This is a more mystical form of the saying, *I will raise him up at the last day* (vi. 44). Compare the two sayings, *The bread I will give is my flesh for the life of the world* (vi. 51), and *I am the bread of life* (vi. 48). *My flesh* means 'myself', an actual personality, the Logos become flesh. The 'I am' form of the saying implies that the Speaker is, in the judgment of faith, even now one who is not only about to give Himself *for the life of the world*, but has already done so (cf. iii. 16). So, *I am the resurrection and the life* is Jesus' answer to Martha's expression of her faith in a future resurrection, *I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection of the dead at the last day*.[1] Jesus' words, *Thy brother shall rise again* (*v.* 23) are meant to include the idea of a present as well as a future resurrection. Martha is at the stage when all her hope is fixed on the future. She is now taught that *he that believeth on me, though he die* (i.e. actually suffers physical death) *yet shall he live* (as Martha believes): and also (what she does not yet understand) *whosoever liveth* (i.e. is still alive) *and believeth on me shall never die*. Belief in Jesus now is equivalent to the possession of eternal life. Jesus, as the incarnate Logos, the Son of Man, is even now to the believer the 'door' into the upper world of truth or reality. He brings even the living believer into an eternal and indestructible relationship with the Father. To our minds it is somewhat perplexing and incongruous that Jesus and Martha should enter, at this stage in the story, upon a discussion of im-

[1] 'I am that day and that life' (*The New Testament in Basic English*).

mortality, but this is the Evangelist's way. The historical personality of Martha for the moment becomes representative of those who as yet cannot see in Jesus the incarnate Word by which alone men live (i. 4; iii. 36). Jesus Himself speaks as one to whom here and now the Father has delegated His power of making dead souls hear and live. John writes in the style of Christian midrash, and thereby gives us the key to the symbolism of the whole narrative. Lazarus is not only a man dead and in his grave about to be raised miraculously to life, but a symbol of those that are dead, i.e. oblivious and ignorant of the heavenly world, who are awakened to faith and to life through the historical coming of Jesus, the Son of Man. The mystery-religion initiate is satisfied if he becomes immortal by some mystic experience. The Evangelist seeks to emphasize the *quality* of life which is alone eternal. *I am the resurrection and the life.* It is a life of faith in Jesus Christ, which makes men sure of the love of the Father, even now. In this insistence that the union of the believer with Christ now is a union that death cannot destroy, John is restating the Pauline doctrine. 'The inner man is being renewed day by day' (2 Cor. iv. 16). The believer even now has the 'earnest of the Spirit' (Rom. viii. 23). 'If He is found now, He is found then: if not, we go but to dwell in the city of death'.

The Evangelist begins again to depict Martha and Mary more realistically.[1] In striking contrast with the Lucan story, Martha approaches her sister *secretly* (*v.* 28). She wishes to detach Mary quietly from her wailing friends, who were making such an unholy tumult. Mary *arose quickly* (*v.* 29), and on hearing of Jesus' arrival was gone before they knew where. They ultimately go to the wrong place (*vv.* 30, 31). The word *Master* literally in the Greek means 'Teacher', but is evidently meant to render the Aramaic 'rabbi'='my great one', a title given by scholars of the Law to one who was authorized to teach. The pronoun came to lose its personal significance (cf. 'Milord') and 'Rabbi' became the special title of a diplomaed doctor of the Law. In the Bethany

[1] An indication that he is making use of a special source, recording historical incidents and relationships.

household Jesus was evidently given that title, but it meant much more than a learned biblical scholar. Jesus had become much more than a teacher of right doctrine, but one whose authority enabled them to live as His disciples and imitators. 'Discipleship was not matriculation in a rabbinical College, but apprenticeship to the work of the Kingdom.'[1] Women (whom the Rabbis did not instruct) as well as men might now use the title as scholars in His school. As applied to Jesus the name connoted the deepest reverence and trust. 'When disciples were speaking they called Jesus *Rabbi*, not from the fact that He was a teacher, but because of His authority.'[2] Note in this connexion xiii. 13. The word is rightly translated *the Master*, because Martha is represented as speaking of One whom she believed to be Master of the whole painful and distressing situation. In verse 22 she is represented as believing that by the power of God, Jesus can still restore her brother to life. (But cf. *v.* 39.)

33-44 *Jesus . . . groaned in the spirit and was troubled* (literally 'troubled Himself' R.V.m.). This is one of the most difficult utterances in the Gospel, and is one of only two passages in the Gospel where emotions of Jesus are recorded (cf. xii. 27). *In the spirit* means 'within Himself' (R.V.m.). The word translated *groaned* may mean also 'was moved with indignation'. It occurs in Mark i. 43, where it is translated 'strictly charged him'. (R.V. The margin has 'sternly'.) The primary sense of the word is to 'snort', and is used of horses. (Aeschylus, *Seven against Thebes*, 461.) This usage may seem quite irrelevant here. Yet there is no doubt that the Evangelist means to indicate an inward emotion which is accompanied by some physical expression, both in the voice and in some movement of the body. This was the result of 'a tremendous agitation of the spirit and expenditure of effort' (Bernard). Is there 'indignation' in the emotion thus expressed? If so, why? The same word is used of the indignation of the guests in Mark xiv. 4, which no doubt expressed itself in the very tone of their remonstrance and even inarticulately. The word is also used

[1] T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus*, p. 240.
[2] F. C. Burkitt, *Christian Beginnings*, pp. 42-48.

in verse 38. It is difficult to get a more suitable word than *groaned,* but even this is inadequate.

What produces this deep emotion? Quite evidently Jesus' distress is, in the first instance, in response to the 'wailing (R.V.m.) of Mary and of the mourners. They express their grief in truly Oriental fashion. They are faithless and impotent in the very presence of the Lord of death, who is 'the resurrection and the life' (*v.* 25). If indignation be an inappropriate word, may we not interpret the Evangelist's meaning by saying that he represents Jesus, in all the consciousness of His Divine love and power, recoiling from such a display of unbelief? (cf. *v.* 40). A similar emotion of Divine impatience is recorded in Mark ix. 19, *O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you?* Rebuke is suggested in the words *groaned in spirit,* but there is also a sense of pity, as in that intercession which Paul described as being 'with *groanings that cannot be uttered'* (Rom. viii. 26).[1] Jesus also *was troubled,* or rather 'troubled Himself'. The words can only be understood as a somewhat clumsy and indeed desperate attempt to conserve the self-control of Jesus which to the Stoic was the mark of the perfect man, and at the same time the doctrine that Jesus was full of sympathy for men, being Himself truly man.[2] He is not merely acted upon by the scene of human distress, but Himself voluntarily 'entered into' the situation, so far as Divine Love could go, which is all the way. 35 *Jesus wept* (*v.* 35). It is noticeable that the word is not the same as that used in the previous verse or in *vv.* 31, 33, of Mary and the other mourners, who are said to 'wail'. Here, however, we have a remarkable instance of the way in which the Stoic doctrine of *apatheia,*[3] which the Evangelist antagonizes, has yet influenced his conception of the emotion of Jesus. 36-37 Jesus' pity is not directed towards the human sorrow of the occasion. Note that the tears of Jesus are misinterpreted, and in two ways, by those around. One section say, *Behold how he loved him.* That is insufficient. These are not tears of mere human sympathy.

[1] Edwin A. Abbott, *The Fourfold Gospel,* pp. 259f.
[2] Cf. Abbott, *op. cit.,* pp. 174, 258f.
[3] Cf. pp. 55ff.

Another section says, *Could not this man, which opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man should not die?* These latter regard the tears as a sign of frustration, inasmuch as He could not prevent His friend's death, and they are also used to discredit a previous miracle. The second interpretation is clearly perverse and hostile, but the former also is meant to be regarded as inappropriate. None of the speakers realize that the tears, like the 'groaning', are the Divine response of pity to the lack of faith displayed in himself. 38 Jesus again displays Divine impatience in view of these interpretations, as He *cometh to the tomb.*

39-40 Verse 39 describes a momentary failure of faith on Martha's part, in sheer dread of what her brother's reopened grave would reveal. Probably her words also serve to emphasize that Lazarus was really dead. 41-42 *Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me.* Verses 41, 42 seem to mean that the prayer of Jesus was unnecessary for Himself, and is made only *for the sake of the multitude which standeth around.* But the thought is not that Jesus did not need to ask for Divine power, but that He actually uttered His prayer in words, so that all might hear and know that the miracle was accomplished by no power of His own, but by the action of God through Him. The translation *I have said it* should really be 'I have spoken'. *He lifted up his eyes.* Both His spoken prayer and His attitude are intended to make it plain that His power is derived from God. The best comment on the words *I know that thou hearest me always* is to be found in ix. 31 and 1 Ep. v. 14. Jesus is always in unbroken personal communion with the Father.

43-44 How the Evangelist envisaged to himself the scene described in verses 43, 44, it is impossible to say. How can a dead man, wrapped in the cerements of death, *come forth?* Here there seems to be a double miracle (cf. vi. 21 and notes).

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

The story raises in an acute form the question of the relation of the Johannine narrative to actual historical fact. It has already been suggested that the Evangelist is here making

use of a source which contained both a story of the raising from the dead of one Lazarus, in which Martha and Mary also figure. He is also in possession of a tradition which relates the story to another describing the anointing of Jesus at a feast prepared in His honour. Evidently his source described the anointing in words that are also reproduced in the Lucan narrative of the woman who was a sinner (Luke vii. 37, 38).[1] The story of the anointing has a fixed place in the Marcan Passion narrative. Luke omits it in his Passion narrative because he has described a similar incident earlier in his Gospel. It is impossible to say whether the Fourth Evangelist himself assumes that Lazarus was the brother of Martha and Mary, or whether the statement is due to his source. The answer to these questions is immaterial. The story of the raising of Lazarus, it may be conjectured, was originally a story of the same character as the Widow's son at Nain (Luke vii. 11ff.), or Jairus' daughter (Mark v. 22, 23, 35-43).[2]

That the story is based upon the account given of some actual incident is suggested by various touches. There is realism in *vv.* 2, 3, where the writer is endeavouring to link up the Lazarus story with the story of the Anointing about to be told. The remonstrances of the disciples in *v.* 8 and the desperate loyalty of Thomas in *v.* 16 are both very true to life. Similarly the behaviour of the two sisters is life-like (*vv.* 20, 28, 29, 32). The question, *Where have ye laid him?* (*v.* 34) would hardly be an invention, inasmuch as it implies ignorance on Jesus' part, who is elsewhere described as supernaturally aware that Lazarus is dead (*v.* 11). The statement that *Jesus wept* must surely belong to the original source, particularly in view of the misinterpretations (*vv.* 36-37) that follow, so characteristic of the Johannine thought

[1] The position taken up by the present writer is that John had not necessarily read Luke's Gospel, but was in possession of a parallel tradition, where, probably during its existence on the lips of preachers or teachers, oral tradition had conflated the version used by Luke with that used by Mark (Mark xiv. 3ff.). Luke does not mention the name of the village, but it appears to be in Galilee (x. 38).

[2] On the theory that the Lazarus story is the free creation of the Evangelist's own mind, based on material derived from the parable of Dives and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 19-31), see pp. 29ff.

and style. Also Lazarus appears more than once subsequently, as a real figure who sits at the meal, whom people come to see, whom the authorities seek to kill. All these are indications that the Johannine account is the interpretation of some recorded incident.

The story as we have it, is best understood as a striking example of Christian midrash.[1] The Jewish midrash, in the form of Haggadah, was interpretation of some Old Testament story in order to serve a homiletic or doctrinal purpose. We have already seen that this Evangelist applies the targum type of midrash to the words of Jesus. It need excite no surprise that, as in the story of the Man at Bethesda, and of the Man born Blind, so here in the Lazarus story, the narratives available to the Evangelist are used and fashioned so as to serve a theological purpose. He crowns his record of the ministry by this story of the raising of a man whom he assumes has been four days in the grave. Thereby, with remarkable imaginative skill and vision he produces a narrative which leaves the reader with a magnificent conception of Jesus the incarnate Logos, who is Lord of life, and by His 'word', Lord of death and the grave. It is as Lord of death that He goes to meet His own death. Thus he selects this story out of his collection of signs with a real artistic sense, in order that it might take its place as the happening which precipitates the action of the ecclesiastical authorities. It is selected with true Johannine irony. These blinded men are unaware that they seek in vain to destroy the 'Lord of glory' (1 Cor. ii. 8).[2]

To many readers it may bring serious perplexity that an Evangelist should thus subject the traditional narrative of the ministry of Jesus to midrashic treatment in the interest of the Christian faith. Taken as an attempt to record bare matter of fact, the Lazarus story remains a sealed chapter, unless we are prepared to allow theological presuppositions to dominate and silence our powers of serious Bible study. 'If

[1] p. 35.

[2] In this passage Paul's 'rulers of this world' are the demonic powers, of whom Caiaphas and the rest were instruments. In this Gospel, Judas is represented as the instrument of Satan (xiii. 2, 27), and Caiaphas as prophesying unawares (xi. 51, 52).

the Lord was indeed God incarnate, the story presents no insuperable difficulties. But of course such a creative act is quite incredible if He is other or less than God incarnate.'[1] By such argument, a certain type of reader may be quieted, but it is ultimately fatal even to any rational acceptance of the miraculous in the ministry of Jesus. Those who do not accept the historic truth of the Lazarus story as it stands, must be defended against the charge of rejecting the miraculous *in toto*, or of believing only what they feel themselves capable of believing. As scientific and reverent students of the Gospels, we must be ready to believe that God can transcend our empirical conceptions of what is possible in this or that instance. Belief in miracle, however, ultimately depends on a religious judgment. The non-religious man may attribute his recovery from serious illness to the surgeon alone, or his escape from danger to luck. The person of Jesus is the supreme miracle, but our Christian belief in His person must not be invoked in order to guarantee the historical accuracy of the works of His biographers. Theological belief ought never to be used as a mental narcotic.

9. The Approach of the Hour. xi. 45–xii. 50.

(1) *The Death of Jesus as determined by the Ecclesiastical Authorities.* xi. 45-53.

45-48 The Evangelist regards the Lazarus miracle as the supreme act which determines the fate of Jesus. *Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council.* The *council* is literally ' the Sanhedrin ', the supreme ecclesiastical court. It was normally composed of Sadducees and a certain number of Pharisees.[2] Pharisees and Sadducees are united in face of the common danger. The Sadducees were in a majority. The danger was lest there be another Messianic rising. Their helplessness is vividly expressed in *What do*

[1] W. Temple, *Readings in St. John's Gospel* I, p. 75.

[2] For a full account of the nature and functions of the *Sanhedrin* see Schürer, *History of the Jewish People* (E.Tr.) II. i. 174-184. A shorter account will be found in Shailer Matthews, *New Testament Times in Palestine* (new and revised edition), pp. 169-171.

we?; rather, 'What are we going to do?' or 'What is to be done?' 'Here is another of these revolutionary movements gathering. We have had them before, but this time we must do something, and cannot *let him alone*. If we do, the Roman imperial authority *will take away both our place and nation.*' The Jews were given a limited freedom under the rule of Rome, but the time was one of smouldering revolutionary feeling, which culminated in the rebellion of A.D. 66, and the ultimate destruction of the Temple and city in A.D. 70 by Titus.[1] The *place* means the Temple (cf. Jer. vii. 14; Neh. i. 9). *Nation* means 'nationality'. There are indications in rabbinic literature, belonging to the years immediately preceeding A.D. 66, of nervousness in the mind of the authorities as to what might befall the Holy Place. Various portents are mentioned by Josephus as having occurred, such as a mysterious light surrounding the altar at night, or gates and doors opening by no visible agency.[2] The Talmud also tells of happenings within forty years before the destruction of the Temple which were interpreted by scribes as presaging disaster.[3] The same atmosphere of disabling apprehension in the minds of men whose religion was insecurely based, caused by Jesus' influence and popularity, is reflected in *vv.* 47, 48.

49, 50 *Ye know nothing at all.* Caiaphas alone keeps his head, and shows contempt for the indecision and impotence of his colleagues. With cold-blooded cynicism he suggests that swift action to arrest Jesus and have Him put to death, would save the situation. The Synoptic Gospels reveal that the plan was to arrest Jesus in some quiet spot, away from the crowd (Mark xiv. 1, 2). Negotiations had no doubt already been begun with Judas for this purpose (Mark xiv. 10). To display Jesus bound and helpless before a crowd that once believed He had miraculous powers but clearly was unable to exercise them on His own behalf and on theirs, would quickly

[1] Cf. Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* vi. 4; 3-7; 9, 2, 3; vii. 1, 1-3.

[2] *Wars* vi. 5, 3.

[3] Palestinian Talmud, *Yoma* 43°. One of these ominous happenings is recorded in Mark xv. 38, not without symbolic meaning. The 'veil' or curtain, which only the High Priest could penetrate, is removed. All Christian believers now have direct access to God.

produce that revulsion of feeling which actually occurred. Caiaphas took good care that his agents should be present when, owing to Pilate's vacillation, there was a chance that the crowd might even yet ask for Jesus' release in preference to Barabbas. These agents knew how to manipulate a crowd (Mark xv. 11).

51 *Being high priest that year* (R.V.). The words do not mean that the priesthood was an annual office, although high priests were always liable to be deposed by the Roman authority for political reasons. The Evangelist three times speaks of *that year* (cf. *v.* 49, xviii. 13). He cannot mean merely to mention a date. According to Hebrew law, the high priesthood was a life appointment. Annas is mentioned later as having examined Jesus. He had been deposed from office in A.D. 15, but evidently retained the courtesy title, and still occupied a position of great influence. He succeeded in the intervening years in getting younger members of his family appointed to succeed him. The office was now held by Caiaphas, his son-in-law, who was appointed in A.D. 18. Caiaphas was deposed in A.D. 37. *That year* is 'that fateful year', in which according to God's eternal purpose, Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Man, was *lifted up*, and ascended His throne by way of the Cross, in order to *draw all men* unto him (xii. 32f.). *This spake he not of himself.* The gift of predictive or oracular prophecy in primitive days traditionally belonged to the priesthood. Josephus claims sacerdotal descent, and therefore to be himself a prophet. (*Wars* iii. 8, 3, 9). Caiaphas, according to this Evangelist, had this Divine gift, and exercised it unconsciously. That the prophet should be unconscious of the real meaning of his prophecy is an idea found in rabbinic writings. In the midrash on Exodus known as *Mechilta*, the commentator says, on Exodus xv. 17, 'Our fathers prophesied and knew not what they prophesied.'[1] In another passage Josephus, dealing with the possibility of a priest attempting to misuse his Divine authority, says that Moses 'left it that God has absolute power to reveal His presence with His priests whensoever He pleases, or to with-

[1] Cf. SB II. 546, for other examples; and Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Johannes*, p. 259

draw it'.[1] He evidently means that God, if He wills, may use any priest as His instrument. The solemn warning that the possession of exceptional religious powers, even successfully exercised by the Christian missionary preacher, is no guarantee of his own genuine personal discipleship, is given in Matt. vii. 22. Josephus also mentions the story that one of the precious stones on the high priest's breastplate was said to 'shine' when God was present at the sacrifice. 'Whence it came to pass that those Greeks, who honoured our rites,[2] call the priest an oracle to them, because they cannot contradict (the facts).'

There is also a peculiar irony in the statement that Caiaphas *spake not of himself*. Caiaphas was a Sadducee. Josephus asserts that the Sadducees denied the idea of 'fate' and held the general position that human destiny is determined by human volition. The Sadducee must, however, have held as an underlying belief, the doctrine of God's sovereign guidance of affairs, inasmuch as he, like the Pharisees, believed that God was King of the nation and Sovereign of the world. The Sadducee also believed that the affairs of the nation were safe in his hands, and that God would be likely to approve his direction of them, even when his motive was the material interests of the nation or of their own party. At the same time he believed that, so far as the individual's destiny is concerned, it is in his own hands, and determined wholly by his own actions.[3] 52 The Evangelist asserts that the determination of Caiaphas to put Jesus to death on grounds of national expediency (*vv.* 50, 53) was overruled by God, and was really in line with His purpose of salvation for the whole world. Caiaphas by sheer force of character bent the whole Sanhedrin to his purpose, but history revealed that God had 'been present' with the priest, and that he had that day offered a more perfect sacrifice than he could possibly know—*the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world* (i. 29).

[1] *Antiquities* iii. 8, 9.
[2] See note on xii. 20.
[3] Cf. J. Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 218.

(2) *Jesus retains complete Freedom of Action.* xi. 54-57.
54 He moves from Bethany to *Ephraim. Wilderness* really means 'hill-country' to the north-east of Jerusalem. *Ephraim* is a town or village, not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament. It has been identified by some as a place 'on the road from Samaria to Jericho, from which it is distant about fifteen miles' (Bernard). 55 *To purify themselves.* Pilgrims had to arrive some days *before the Passover* to carry out this purpose (cf. Num. ix. 10; John xviii. 28; Acts xxi. 24). 56 The questioning among the pilgrims as *they stood in the Temple, What think ye? That he will not come to the feast?* is a vivid touch of reality. The pilgrims stood in the precincts where they came for purposes of purification. 57 If Jesus is coming, He will certainly be seen there also. There was excitement as to whether anyone would betray His presence, in obedience to the ecclesiastical edict.

(3) *The Anointing at Bethany.* xii. 1-8.

Similar stories of an Anointing are told in the Synoptics (Matt. xxvi. 6-13; Mark xiv. 3-9; Luke vii. 36-50). In none of these is the name of the woman given. John is the only evangelist who identifies her with Mary of Bethany. Matthew is clearly dependent on Mark's story. Luke derives his story from his own peculiar tradition, and although he uses Mark largely elsewhere in his gospel, here he rejects Mark's narrative which is included in the Passion story, and places the incident earlier, in the house of one Simon whom Mark describes as having been cured of leprosy. Luke also describes the woman as an immoral person. There can be little doubt that the stories of Mark and Luke have come down on different streams of oral tradition.

The remarkable thing about the Johannine story is that its language is reminiscent both of Mark and of Luke. He speaks of 'ointment of spikenard very costly' (Mark xiv. 3). Judas says that 'it might have been sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor' (Mark xiv. 5, where, however, the saying is attributed to some of the guests). There is very great similarity of language between John xii. 7, 8 and Mark xiv. 7, 8. Both traditions relate that Jesus connected the

anointing with the burying. The chief verbal resemblance to Luke is that the woman 'wiped his feet with her hair' (Luke vii. 38). John repeats these words twice (xi. 2; xii. 3). There is also a reminiscence of the Lucan story of Martha and Mary (x. 40) in the words, *Martha served* (*v.* 2). The traditional explanation of these resemblances to the other two Gospels is that John made literary use of both, constructing a composite story, but had made his own identification of the woman with Mary of Bethany.

This explanation creates great difficulties. (*a*) Is it credible that John would have thus used the name of Mary of Bethany when Luke had given her another entirely different character in x. 38-42 from that which he ascribes to the unnamed woman in Simon's house? (*b*) Are we to understand that John is directly indebted to the Lucan story when he says that *Martha served*? (*c*) What would lead him so to change the motive for the act? In the Johannine story the motive is gratitude for the restoration of Mary's brother from death. In Luke's story, the motive is penitence. (*d*) How are we to account for the fact that there is nothing in the Johannine story to account for the statement that Mary wipes the feet of Jesus with her hair? Why should Mary, who is presumably one of the hostesses, have her hair unbound?

These difficulties make it impossible to think that all the changes in the story, and the conflation of two separate traditions are the work of the Evangelist. His literary method elsewhere does not suggest that he would ever employ such a 'scissors and paste' method. No doubt he employed his creative imagination on the material that he had before him, but it is much more probable that his material had already been shaped before it reached his hand. The most likely suggestion is that in oral tradition, details from the traditions underlying the Marcan and the Lucan stories had become woven together, as in stories handed from mouth to mouth would happen quite naturally. John is making use of a tradition which already contains material from the Marcan and Lucan traditions, but has come to him independently of these.[1]

[1] Cf. Gardner-Smith *SJSG* 47ff.

3 *Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very precious* (i.e. 'costly'). The amount is very large. John speaks not only of the value of the perfume, but enhances the costliness of the act by emphasizing the lavish quantity used (cf. ii. 6; xix. 39); also by the words, *the house was filled with the odour.* A midrash on Ecclesiastes vii. 1 says, 'A good unguent spreads from the bedroom to the dining-hall; so does a good name spread from one end of the world to the other' (see also Bernard *ICC*). Rabbi Jochanan (third century A.D.) thus beautifully comments on Gen. xii. 1. 'To what is Abraham to be likened? He is like an alabaster-flask containing oil of nard, which lay in a corner, and its fragrance was not dispersed. Then came one and took it out of its place, and its fragrance was dispersed abroad.'[1] The idea that the odour of the unguent was dispersed is symbolic, and is the Johannine equivalent of the words in Mark xiv. 9.

4-6 The cavil in *v.* 5 is ascribed to Judas (cf. Matt. xxvi. 8).

7 *Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying* (R.V.). The words have been variously interpreted and are difficult. Most probably they mean that some of the large quantity is left over, and will be devoted later to an even finer purpose. Mary at the moment is anointing the living body of Jesus. That body will soon lie in the grave. She alone, of all concerned, recognizes why Jesus is laying down His life. His death is the gateway to life. She knows already that even in life He is 'the resurrection and the life', through what He has done for Lazarus. To her alone there is apparent the costliness of the voluntary sacrifice of Jesus, an act that appeared, like her own, so wasteful, useless, and even wrong.

8 *The poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always.* These words are a defence of the noblest artistic expressions of religious faith. Mary has seized the only opportunity that she will ever have while Jesus is still on earth to express her faith in Him, an opportunity which the others have let slip; also the opportunity to do Him just the kindness that He needed at the moment, the kindness of being understood. The others were blind and missed the

[1] SB I. 986.

opportunity; 'me ye have not always'. The poor will not suffer. Inasmuch as they understand and share Christ's motive in giving all He had, people like Mary will see to it that relief is given not merely to bodily but to spiritual needs; also that good deeds are done at the right time and in the right way. Poverty is a disease of the spirit as well as a physical disability. *The poor ye have always with you,* and Mary is not the kind of Christian whose conception of Christ's teaching is to wait until some crying case is brought to her notice, before she understands that help is needed and service required.

(4) *The Triumphal Entry.* xii. 9-19.

9-11 The Triumphal Entry is recorded in all the Gospels. It is an act of homage proclaiming Jesus as Messiah, the only act of homage prepared for and permitted by Him. In Mark the story is placed before the visit to Bethany (xi. 1-10). Here the story is prefaced by verses 9-11, which mention details intended to account for the mood of the populace (*v.* 9). Also the Evangelist affords another glimpse by way of dramatic contrast into the hearts of the ecclesiastical authorities, bent on the destruction of the Messiah (*vv.* 10, 11).

13 *The branches of the palm trees* (R.V.). The Synoptic story does not mention palm branches. The expression has been taken as proof that the Evangelist did not know his ground, as there are no palm trees in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Jericho is the 'city of palms' (Deut. xxxiv. 3).[1] But it is not meant that the branches were cut from trees on the spot. He does not say where they came from. It is true that palm branches were carried at the Feast of Tabernacles, not at Passover time. The Evangelist, however, is interested only in their traditional significance. Palm branches are a symbol of rejoicing and of victory after war (1 Macc. xiii. 51; 2 Macc. x. 7). In Rev. vii. 9, those who have palm branches in their hands are not only the martyrs who have laid down their lives for Christ's sake. They represent all who have triumphed through the risen Christ over the worst that life could bring them (Rev. vii. 16). In the present narrative,

[1] Cf. G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography*, 25th edition, p. 262, n. 4.

the crowd carry palm branches as those who are greeting One who is already Conqueror of death (*vv.* 9, 17). The hymn in Rev. vii. 9-17 is probably part of some early Christian service, where those who had become martyrs were commemorated, and the living were encouraged to endure. In these heavenly scenes of adoration and worship in the Book of Revelation (cf. v. 9ff.), we have the reflection of certain forms of the earliest Christian worship. What is done and said on earth, is done and said in heaven. The scenes in the world above are sometimes thrown into the form of hymns, often antiphonal in character (Rev. vii. 13, 14). Is the introduction of the palm branches carried by the crowd suggested to the Evangelist's mind by such a service of commemoration? There can be little doubt that the customary liturgical expressions of early Christian worship, as well as theological reflection, have made their impress on the narrative of the Gospels (cf. i. 9; the song of Mary in Luke i. 46-55, or the prophecy of Zacharias *vv.* 67-79).[1] What more fitting 'lesson for the day' than the recitation of the story of the Triumphal Entry? Moreover, the cry, '*Hosanna: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel* (R.V.) echoes a characteristic conception of the person of Jesus in this Gospel. Jesus is essentially One who 'comes'. He comes *in the name of the Father* (v. 43; cf. xi. 27). He comes from God and He also goes, after the resurrection, to God (xiii. 3). He will go away and come again (cf. xvi. 16-22). And after He has gone He will come to dwell with His disciples (xiv. 23). He will come in the Spirit to share His victory with the Church (xiv. 17-19). The conception is finely expressed in Calvin's words, 'He furnishes us with strength, by which (our souls) stand invincible against any attack whatsoever of our spiritual enemies. . . . He reigns more for us than for Himself, and He does so within and without' (*Institutes* II. xv. 4). In the teaching of the Fourth Gospel the 'coming' of Christ is not merely the future coming for final judgment. The Second Advent and the Incarnation are both the coming of Christ.

[1] The influence of the early Christian cult may also be found in the Passion narratives. Like other discoveries of the Form-critics, this one is apt to be greatly exaggerated in its application. See G. Bertram, *Der Leidensgeschichte Jesu und des Christuskult.*

In the Church year, the season of Advent introduces the birth in Bethlehem and the Incarnation. The birth of Christ is also the dawn of His advent in Divine power (Luke i. 51-54; Mark i. 15; Luke xi. 20). In this gospel, the future coming of Christ is almost obscured in the strong faith that He came from heaven to earth, clothed with the delegated power and authority of the Father. In the Johannine version of the Triumphal Entry, Jesus goes to His death, as *King of Israel* (cf. notes on i. 49-51), even in the flesh the Messianic vicegerent of God. He goes to God, through death, having overcome sin and death for our sake, only in order to be 'lifted up' that He may draw all men unto Himself (xii. 32). The crowd is composed of those that were *with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead,* and of those who had *heard that he had done this miracle* (*vv.* 17, 18).

14 The triumphant Messiah comes riding on *a young ass.* The suggestion is not one of *humility,* but that He is a King who comes on an errand of peace. The ass and the mule were the animals used by great persons when they travelled. The horse was used in war (cf. 2 Samuel xix. 26).

15 The verse from Zech. ix. 9 is cited as having been in the mind of Jesus as He entered the city for the last time (Matt. xxi. 5). Jesus here deliberately allows a prophetic utterance to shape His action. Here it is given in an abbreviated form, and *Fear not* is substituted for 'Rejoice greatly'. The acclamation of the crowd was due to nationalistic expectation, and was based on misunderstanding. The action of Jesus is not the cause of the crowd's tumultuous welcome as in the Synoptic stories, but is occasioned by it. He comes [illegible] King, but to bring peace through the way [illegible] death on which He is entering. Imperfect [illegible] was Jesus accepts it, inasmuch as what [illegible] would effectively remove all misunderstan[illegible] depicted in *vv.* 20-36 is in complete contr[illegible] whom the crowd imagined they were [illegible] the substitution of 'Fear not' for [illegible] Zechariah is more appropriate. *Daugh[illegible]* prophetic idiom = 'inhabitants of Je[illegible]

of the Evangelist has a reference beyond the actual crowd who acclaim Jesus. In that acclaiming crowd, the Evangelist sees the nucleus of the future Christian Church. 'Mount Zion' (cf. Heb. xii. 22) in the thought of New Testament Christians stands for the holy city, the 'New Jerusalem' (Rev. xiv. 1; xxi. 2); i.e. the church as it is ideally in the thought and purpose of God. The Christian Church is no humanly conceived and humanly constructed organization. It comes 'down from heaven'. Paul speaks of the church as 'the Jerusalem that is above . . . which is our mother' (Gal. iv. 26f.). The prophecy is regarded as spoken to a church yet to be begotten of God out of the ruins of the ancient Zion which is about to crucify her 'King'. *Fear not* is an expression often on Jesus' lips, and is used in His message of encouragement to the 'little flock' of disciples who are the 'church in miniature' (Hort) and are promised 'the Kingdom' (Luke xii. 32). In the Triumphal Entry, the 'King' is about to end His earthly mission, which He conceived as the evangelization of Israel (Matt. xv. 24). That mission, in the eyes of men, is about to end in failure through death at the hands of 'his own' (i. 11). It is as though God Himself, by the mouth of His prophet, said 'Fear not' to the Church just coming into being, as it faces with Christ the sombre and disabling event of the Crucifixion of the King. 19 Even his enemies unconsciously prophesy the invincibility and universality of Christ and His Church. *Behold how ye prevail nothing: lo, the world is gone after him.*

(c) *The Coming of the Greeks.* xii. 20-36a.

related to *v.* 19. Speaking, like Caiaphas, 'not opponents say *the whole world is gone after* re a token of the future world mission of the These are not Greek-speaking Jews, resident y birth and religion. Neither are they con- faith. They belong to the same class of the Roman Centurion of the Gospels and Acts x). They represent those of whom many in that ancient world, whose own atisfy and who found in Judaism with its eous and living God, its banishment of

idolatry, its mysterious temple cult without any visible representation of deity, its moral teaching, a religion that deeply attracted them. Their own religion had broken down under the weight of cares, doubts and questionings which life in a troubled and often cruel world had brought them.[1] In Acts they are called those who 'feared God', or 'worshipped God', as distinct from the born Jew (x. 2; xiii. 16, 26). Circumcision was not demanded of them, only a general adherence to the moral law of Judaism. They were encouraged to visit Jerusalem for the great feasts, but were not permitted to enter the temple further than the 'court of the Gentiles'.

21 *Sir, we would see Jesus.* These Greeks are represented as seeking to know Jesus, their minds unprejudiced by the nationalistic ideas which had blinded the eyes of the Jerusalem multitude, and even of the disciples (*v.* 16). They are enlightened in a discourse which follows, addressed, as it were, to the greater world which they represent. They themselves disappear from the narrative as suddenly as they came.
23 Jesus is deeply moved by their request. They are to Him a symbol and assurance from God that the Divinely appointed hour has come, when He is about to finish, or bring to God's appointed end, the work which God had given Him to do on earth. *The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified* (see pp. 103ff.; cf. xvii. 4, 5, 24).
24 *Except a corn of wheat . . . beareth much fruit.* In Matt. xiii. 23 Jesus describes the action of the 'gospel' in the heart of the disciple in similar terms. Here, He speaks of His own death as the end of His mission in this symbolic way. The 'Greeks' make their request, and then disappear from the scene. We are not told that it is granted. The Evangelist would seem to indicate that the larger world does not *see Jesus,* until He has died and risen again. Do Philip (*v.* 21) and Andrew (*v.* 22), who are evidently deeply interested, see in the request an opportunity for the beginning of a wider mission; a call to their Master to turn from His plan to face death at the hands of the Jewish authorities? (cf. the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman and Jesus' words in

[1] See Introduction, pp. 47f.; cf. A. W. F. Blunt, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Clarendon Bible), p. 160; Kirsopp Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul,* Chapter II.

Matt. xv. 24). But Jesus will not be deflected from the path ordained by the Father, and indicates in the words of *v.* 24 that His own life cannot bring forth fruit for all the world save by submission to death (cf. xii. 31).

The nearest analogy to this symbolic use of the wheat grain is found in 1 Cor. xv. 37f. In the Eleusinian mysteries, the grain of corn had a place in what was once an agricultural rite, intended to promote the fertility of the soil,[1] but later became symbolic of immortality.[2] There is, however, nothing peculiarly Hellenic in the words of verse 24, which are in harmony with the Evangelist's conception of the death of Jesus as His entry into life with the Father, bringing with Him all believers (cf. xvii. 10).

25-26 *He that loveth his life shall lose it* (cf. Mark viii. 35 and parallels). *He that hateth . . . life eternal. Hateth* (cf. Luke xiv. 26) is to our ears an oriental exaggeration, but actually emphasizes the totalitarian demand which the devotion and obedience of true discipleship makes on men. There come moments when personal affection and interests, material advantages, or the opinion of others must fearlessly be set aside. It is interesting to note that in the Johannine thought, as in Paul's (Phil. ii. 5-11), the Cross is markedly not only an act of redemption, but a way of living which enables the disciples to share Christ's life here and hereafter. No moral principle of living could be more antagonistic to the Greek mind than this. The Greek worshipped bodily excellence and feared bodily ill.[3] The Stoic might teach that good might be gained from evils that happened to a man, even from death itself. He acquires a certain firmness and tranquillity in the presence of these, based on a studied indifference. Yet the Stoic won no victory. He left only a reputation and example behind him. Even Epictetus has to confess the failure of his teaching. 'We carry these views

[1] Cicero (*De Legibus* II. xxv. 63) describes an Athenian custom of sowing grain on the new-made grave, in order to purify the soil, and induce it still to bring forth fruit for the living, in spite of desecration by a dead body.

[2] Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* IX. 78a.

[3] Cf. R. W. Livingstone, *The Greek Genius and Its Meaning for Us* Chapter IV.

to the lecture-room door, but no one takes them home.'[1]

The coming of the Greeks is the signal that the Spirit of Jesus is about to be set free on its world-wide mission. This can happen only through His death, resurrection and return to glory by the divinely appointed way of suffering. We are also made to feel here the pressure of a certain problem on the mind of the Christian Church in the Graeco-Roman world. The historic Jesus regarded His earthly mission as confined to Jews (Matt. xv. 24). The words of *vv.* 23-26 are meant to make intelligible to the Hellenic Christian why Jesus actually devoted His mission on earth to Palestinian Jews. It was in order that He might die, in order to be 'lifted up' (p. 258). He will 'bring' or 'lead' these Gentile sheep (x. 16), but not by means of an earthly ministry. He will do so by means of a 'word', not by reproducing among them His earthly ministry of 'signs and wonders' (iv. 48. See notes). Jesus was slain by the Jews in order that He might become Saviour of the world. Compare the 'many' of Mark xiv. 24, Isaiah lii. 15, where 'many' are the Gentiles for whom the Servant dies. The 'all men' of xii. 32 is the Johannine rendering.

27 *Now is my soul troubled . . . but for this cause came I unto this hour.* The divinely appointed *hour* has arrived when the ministry of Jesus is at an end, and the debates to which it gave rise must cease. Jesus must take decisive action. The Jewish nation to which He had been sent, must give its verdict. This decisive action of Jesus is also passion. It is not to be accomplished save with agonizing cost. The words of this verse are reminiscent of Gethsemane, although John does not mention it (Mark xiv. 35f. and parallels). He records Jesus' words about 'the cup' in xviii. 11 (Matt. xx. 22; xxvi. 39, 42). The Evangelist knows that the experience in the Garden was not a sudden accession of 'trouble'. The soul of Jesus was troubled, not merely because of the terrible, lonely ordeal that lay before Him, but by the suffering (and temptation) caused by the thought that He had brought His disciples into a situation where it was doubtful if they would be able to endure. They are the nucleus of the Church yet

[1] *Dissertations* III. 20, Matheson's Translation.

to be. In Mark xiv. 38 He bids them 'watch and pray' lest they enter into temptation. He prayed for them (Luke xxii. 31f.). 'What took place in the garden was not an isolated crisis; it was the focus of a lifelong temptation and of a lifelong victory over temptation' (Temple). Yet the Fourth Evangelist prevailingly describes Jesus as serene and confident. 'He has no unexpected problems to face. He knows no surprise, for He sees every step of the pathway in front of Him to the very end.'[1] *What shall I say?* 'What shall I say?' not 'What shall I choose?' (*Quid dicam? non quid eligam?*)[2] Jesus desires no choice between His own will and the Father's. He is concerned only to know what that will is, in order that He may obey. *Father save me from this hour?* (R.V.m.). *But for this cause came I unto this hour.* The best commentary ever made on this utterance are the terse words of Bengel. *Concurrebat horror mortis et ardor obedientiae*; 'horror of death and ardour of obedience are fused together'.

28. *Father, glorify thy name.* See note on 'Glory' and 'Glorify', pp. 103ff. *Then came there a voice from heaven, saying I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* God has already made known His love and power in the human ministry soon about to end. The Cross is no interruption of His purpose, but its climax. All that Jesus says and does, is said and done by God Himself (v. 43; x. 25; xvii. 11).

A 'voice from heaven' is mentioned several times in the New Testament (Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5, and parallel passages; Acts x. 13, 15; Rev. x. 4, 8; cf. Daniel iv. 31). The idea of the 'voice from heaven' appears frequently in rabbinical literature. In rabbinic circles it was believed that the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, once given to the prophets, had been withheld from Israel since the death of the last of the prophets. In its stead, a mysterious 'voice from heaven' was given on occasion to individual rabbis, in order to authenticate their decisions and their interpretations of Scripture. The name given to this mysterious voice was *bath*

[1] R. N. Flew, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology*, p. 117. See also p. 194 of the present work.
[2] Bengel, *Gnomon*.

qōl='daughter voice'. This curious expression is intended to mean that the *actual* voice of God was not heard. The idea springs from reverence. God must not be thought of as a 'magnified man'. In these 'auditions' the rabbi believed that he heard what might be called an echo of the real voice. It is interesting to note that warnings had to be given against the abuse of the *bath qōl*. These show a real sense of responsibility for distinguishing between genuine spiritual guidance and blind trust in a kind of spiritual magic which belongs to auto-suggestion. Sometimes the Voice came in the words of Scripture. Rabbi Jehoschua (A.D. 90-130) goes so far as to say that no heed is to be given to a *bath qōl*, so far as decisions on matters of daily conduct are concerned. The Torah itself is sufficient guidance.[1] So far as these voices are in the words of Scripture, we may recognize the equivalent of what we would call guidance from Scripture.

It is rather difficult to understand why the Evangelist speaks of a *bath qōl* coming to Jesus at all, if he shared the view that the *bath qōl* is a substitute for the temporary withdrawal of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was already in possession of the Spirit, and in full and continuous possession, unlike the prophets (iii. 34. See notes). He seems to be conscious of this contradiction, inasmuch as he records the statement in *v.* 30, *This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes.* The meaning seems to be that the voice takes the form of an audible sound, only for the sake of *the multitude*. The Greek word for 'voice' may also mean 'sound' (cf. iii. 8). Here we meet with the same conception as in xi. 41f. (see notes). The *verbal utterance* of the prayer is for the bystanders. Jesus' own communion with God is silent and immediate.

Why, then, does the Evangelist introduce the idea of the external voice or 'sound' at all? It is permissible to suppose that he had before him a written source, one of his collection of 'signs' (xx. 30). In that source the sound is heard by all as Jesus spoke. 29 The *multitude* is divided as to its significance. None of them heard the actual words. *The multitude said that it had thundered; others said, An angel hath spoke to him.* Thunder is often regarded in the Old Testament as

[1] Cf. H. Loewe, *Judaism and Christianity* II, pp. 19ff.; SB I. 127.

the voice of God (Ps. xxix. 3ff.; Jer. x. 13, etc.). All the crowd heard the sound, and most of them were so unimpressed that they said, 'It is only thunder.' Others, who reflected more deeply, felt that the sound was some Divine message to Jesus, sent from God by an 'angel'. The Evangelist interprets his material in his own way. Neither section of the crowd really heard the words of the *bath qōl*. Neither heard in it the direct voice of God, proclaiming that Jesus' interpretation of His own person and mission was in accordance with the Divine mind and will. 31, 32 The voice foretold the glorification of Jesus—His death on the cross, resurrection, and ascension, as the fulfilment of the Divine plan. This meaning Jesus extracts from the voice, *Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.*[1] The atmosphere becomes heavy with judgment. What Jesus is about to do and to suffer deeply concerns the destiny of men. God will now speak in deeds, no longer only in words. The word of God becomes what Paul calls the 'word (*logos*) of the Cross' (1 Cor. i. 18, R.V.). The response to the arrival of the Divinely appointed 'hour' must be the choice between belief and unbelief, between light and darkness. The passage, 1 Cor. i. 17-25, is an illuminating commentary on these verses.

The creative word is about to embody itself in one final deed of Divine Judgment. It is also God's final judgment on the *prince of this world*, i.e. the devil. In the providence of God, the devil has been permitted to take possession of the hearts of the religious leaders of the chosen people (viii. 44). *Now* (i.e. at the Divinely-appointed moment) *shall the prince of this world be cast out*; not out of the world, but out of power. *Now* there breaks in God's invincible power, which is love. The Son of Man will be 'uplifted' through His very rejection by His own people. By His 'uplifting' on the cross, Jesus will be given world-dominion; will become *de*

[1] It is interesting to note that voices from heaven appear in the stories of the martyrdom of two rabbis, who died *c.* A.D. 130 (Fiebig, *Judische Wundergeschichten*, pp. 39, 43). Here the voice accompanies the prophecy by Jesus of His own death. The original tale underlying the account in this Gospel was cast in popular mould.

facto the *Saviour of the world*, as, in His human ministry, He was *de jure*. *I will draw all men unto myself*. These words are the Johannine counterpart of Matt. xi. 28. To *draw all men* is described elsewhere as the prerogative of God (vi. 44). This prerogative now belongs to the crucified and exalted Christ. On the significance of the word 'uplift' for 'crucify', see further, pp. 138ff.

33 *This he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die*. This comment of the Evangelist is to be understood in the light of the fact that in his Passion story, the Jewish authorities are determined that He shall die, not by stoning but by crucifixion at the hands of the Roman authorities (see further, pp. 312f.). Their decision is already foreseen by Jesus.

34 *The Christ abideth for ever*. The thought of the speakers is nationalistic. The restored Jewish kingdom will be permanent. Of 'Son of man' as a popular title of Messiah there is no sign. Such a usage is not supported by the Synoptic Gospels, where the title is found only on the lips of Jesus. 'The Son of man must suffer many things' is spoken only to disciples. Here the Evangelist regards 'Son of man' as a popular Messianic title on the lips of the crowd. *Who is this Son of man?* Or perhaps, 'What kind of Son of man is this (who will disappear without exercising his power)?' The idea of the permanence of the Davidic Messiah is found in Ezek. xxxvii. 25; Ps. lxxxix. 4; cx. 4; Is. ix. 7; of the 'Son of man' in Dan. vii. 14.

35-36a Before Jesus enters on the days of His Passion and the darkness begins to overwhelm Him (i. 5), He utters some further words of solemn appeal, lest His hearers be among those who mistake the darkness of defeat and of death awaiting Him for what it appears to be. He would even now open their eyes to the Light that still shines in His Cross and Resurrection. In the few moments, as it were, still left in which He yet can speak to them, He says, *Yet a little while is the light among you. Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not* (R.V.). Without that light they will be as one *that walketh in darkness*, and *knoweth not whither he goeth*. It is as though Jesus watches these men moving into

darkness without a Guide, with infinite sorrow and longing. It is still possible for them to become *sons of light*, those who find the sources of life in the Light and walk in the way which the Light reveals, themselves becoming 'the light of the world' (cf. Matt. v. 14).

(6) *Summaries of the Mission and Message of Jesus.*

(*a*) *In the Evangelist's own words. vv.* 36b-43.

36b *He departed and hid himself from them.* The words are symbolical. The *little while* (*v.* 35) is at an end. The 'light' of the public ministry is now finally withdrawn from the 'Jews'. The chosen nation that has been blind to Christ's claims and will soon crucify Him, is now 'walking in darkness'. Henceforward Jesus speaks only to His disciples and to Pilate.

38-40 In *vv.* 38-40 the Evangelist cites two passages from Isaiah which he applies to the situation. The early church appears to have had, for the convenience of preachers and teachers, collections of proof-texts from the Old Testament (*testimonia*), intended to prove that all that happened to Jesus was foreshadowed in the Old Testament.

'We know what Jesus of Nazareth has been to the world; they (the evangelists) lived in an age which was only beginning to find out. The argument from Prophecy is ultimately an attempt to show that the life and mission of Jesus was no Divine freak or caprice, but a part of a well-ordered whole. To the pious Jew, the utterances of the Prophets had very much the same place in their idea of the world as what we call the laws of Nature have for us: they were things which had been formulated by men, yet they were not constituted by man, but by God.'[1] The Christian Church took over this conception of Prophecy. In the utterances of the prophets they heard the expression of God's eternal will and purpose, 'promises' fulfilled no longer to the nation, but in the coming of a Person, Jesus Christ (2 Cor. i. 20). Not only did this belief serve to strengthen faith in the Christian message, but it was a powerful defence against those who sought to discredit it on the ground that Jesus was no real Messiah inasmuch as His own people had rejected and crucified Him. In addition, the belief was intended to meet the Roman objection to Christianity, that it was a new-fangled freak religion, had no history, and was

[1] Burkitt *GHT* 201ff.

not entitled to be regarded as a 'permitted' religion (*religio licita*).

This belief was no invention of the early Christians. Jesus Himself had so taught His disciples. His mission and message were the final fulfilment of God's eternal purpose for men, as foreshadowed by the prophets (e.g. Matt. v. 17; Luke iv. 16-21). His death was foretold in the fate of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah liii, a passage which Judaism never connected with the Messiah. Similarly Mark x. 45 (=Matt. xx. 20-28=Luke xxii. 25-27) is reminiscent of this chapter (cf. Matt. xxiii. 11). Jesus was a profound student of the Old Testament. This habit of studying the Old Testament, of nourishing His own religious life upon it, and finding in it a means of interpreting His own mission, was taught the disciples by Jesus Himself. It is quite true that the early Christian 'proof-texts', the use of which can be amply illustrated in the Gospels and Epistles, do not always seem thoroughly applicable, and suggest sometimes mere verbal ingenuity. 'Quotations from the Old Testament, made by Jesus Himself, show a very different degree of literary tact from those made by His followers.'[1]

The application of the prophetic quotations in *vv.* 38-40 sound intolerably harsh in our ears. The original haunting pathos of Is. liii. 1 (*v.* 38) is lost.[2] *They could not believe* (*v.* 39) because it was so ordained in the prediction of Is. vi. 10. The sternness of the prophecy loses nothing in the translation, *lest they should see*, etc. (But compare Moffatt's translation of *v.* 39.) *God hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart.* We may easily be led to accept a superficial interpretation of the Evangelist's meaning. It would be simply absurd to attribute to him the belief that those who crucified Jesus were irretrievably destined by God to think and behave as they did. How then could they be held responsible? Why pass judgment on them at all? We must, in our interpretation, by no means evade the full shattering force of the words used, but it is essential that we should see what the Evangelist saw, borrowing both his eyes and his mind.

1. The passage is not merely the expression of a stern and

[1] Burkitt *GHT* 203.

[2] The fact that in *v.* 38 only the opening verse of Is. liii is quoted, and that there is no reference to the suffering of the 'Servant' must be understood in the light of what has been already said (pp. 104f.) on the Evangelist's general attitude towards the suffering of Jesus on the Cross.

narrow theological mentality, operating in the abstract. He is reflecting on the appalling historical fact that the religious authorities of his own nation, under the leadership of God's High Priest, crucified the Son of God, and that the people consented. We tend to think and talk of the 'Cross' abstracted from its historical setting. The Evangelist was probably in a position, as one of the priestly connexion, to know at first hand the time-serving and worldly motives that actuated the priests and the Sanhedrin, and were powerful enough to reduce to silent acquiescence men like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea (cf. *vv.* 42f.). Did he himself feel his own marvellous escape as a former Sadducee[1] from such direct and terrible responsibility, inasmuch as his own eyes had been opened? Such an application of prophecy as we have in *vv.* 38-40 is apt to arouse abstract discussions about predestination and freewill. Such questionings can only be for real profit, if they are connected with some acute and real *personal* problem of pain and evil. It is in connexion with an actual concrete situation, in which he himself was clearly involved, that the Evangelist writes. It must be admitted that in this Gospel there is no passionate longing for Israel's repentance such as throbs in Paul's heart (e.g. Rom. ix. 1-15; x. 1; xi. 25, 26). The Jews appear throughout as the implacable enemies of Jesus and as typical unbelievers. One ray of light pierces the dark outlook. 'Salvation is of the Jews' (iv. 22).

2. We must also understand the philosophy of history that underlies and governs Jewish Christian thought on this theme. God is represented as the sovereign Agent in all history. He is a 'living God' (i.e. is a God who 'acts' in order to carry out His purposes towards and through His chosen people). Nothing can stand in the way of His purposes. The Jew could say, *The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart* (Exod. x. 27), where we would say, 'Under God's providence Pharaoh hardened his heart', without denying that Pharaoh was free to respond to the appeal of Moses. The Jew thought in terms of cause, where we would think in terms of effect. The Evangelist's thinking is similar. The blinded eyes and the hardened hearts of Christ's enemies are

[1] pp. 86f.

actually the evil result of their own refusal to respond to Christ's coming and appeal. That the moral and spiritual order of things should be such that refusal of this kind is inevitably followed by spiritual and moral deterioration—hardening of heart—is the doing of God who created and sustains it. In that region of thought alone can it be said that *God blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts.*

(*b*) *A Summary in terms of Jesus' own Words. vv.* 44-50.

We are already familiar with all the ideas here expressed, and may conclude that those that are singled out are intended to represent what the Evangelist considered to be most central and illuminating in His interpretation of Christ's mission and message, and as bringing out their eternal significance. The ideas are, *Believing* (*v.* 44); Beholding Jesus, i.e. with the bodily eye and seeing the eternal truth which He represents (*v.* 46); *Hearing* and its responsibility, and *judgment* (*v.* 47); Rejection of Christ and its doom (*v.* 48); The Father speaks when Jesus speaks (*v.* 49); His words are words that bring life (*v.* 50). It is as though the Evangelist desired to leave his readers, with the impression that his own estimate of the significance of the ministry is based on that of Jesus Himself.

IV. THE PASSION NARRATIVE. xiii–xix.

1. Jesus Alone with His Disciples. xiii–xvii.

(1) *The Washing of the Disciples' Feet.* xiii. 1-17.

It is one of the problems of the Fourth Gospel that the writer omits the story of the institution of the Lord's Supper, and inserts this incident which took place either during or after the meal (according to our interpretation of the Greek in *v.* 22. See A.V. and R.V.) Various suggestions have been made to account for the omission. The following may be mentioned:

(*a*) That already in vi. 30-59 the Evangelist has expounded the spiritual meaning of the Last Supper. The reference to the sacramental experience is, however, as we have already

seen, confined to a small part of that discourse (pp. 190f.).

(*b*) That there are indications that the Evangelist is aware of the danger of interpreting too literally the language of the words of institution, lest some magical view of partaking be entertained (e.g. vi. 52ff.). His instinct recognizes that it would be unsuitable to correct mistaken views at the same time as he records the scene in the Upper Room. 'The Upper Room was no place for doctrinal polemic.'[1] He therefore omits the story of the institution.

(*c*) There is, however, a much simpler explanation of the omission. The Evangelist is concerned to give an interpretation of the spirit in which Jesus approaches His death. He might well assume that his readers are thoroughly acquainted with the traditional words of institution which were very early a part of Christian sacramental worship (1 Cor. xi. 23-25). The story of the feet-washing is a symbol of the voluntary humiliation of Jesus, which gives significance to the sacrament. The further significance of the death of Jesus as His departure to be with the Father, followed by His return in the Spirit to dwell with His disciples, is developed in the Farewell Discourses. All these conceptions centre in the mind of the Evangelist and of those to whom he writes, around the sacramental act of Jesus at the Last Supper. It was therefore unnecessary to repeat the story.

It is possible to find an historical connexion and occasion for this action of Jesus in what Luke tells us of the contentious spirit aroused by the question of precedence in the new Kingdom (Luke xxii. 24ff.). It is doubtful whether the Fourth Evangelist makes the connexion. Moreover, the action of Jesus is not fully interpreted by recalling the occasion. The narrative here conveys more than a rebuke and a corrective to the disciples' mood. It is much more likely that what Jesus here did is represented as an acted parable in the true prophetic style. The attitude of the 'servant' which Jesus assumes, the girding with the towel, the pouring out of water, and the washing, are regarded as actions of the same class as

[1] Howard *FGRC*, p. 214; Scott *FG*, pp. 122f.

the breaking of the bread—' effective representations '.[1] The words in which Jesus interprets His action in washing the feet of the disciples go beyond the occasion suggested in Luke, as the exposition will show.

1-4 *Before the feast of the passover.* John thus indicates that the meal was not a passover, and that Jesus met His disciples, was arrested, tried and crucified, on the day before the Passover began. The Feast began at six o'clock on Friday evening. (The Jew reckoned the day from sunset to sunset.) This would make the death of Jesus coincide with the killing of the paschal lamb on the afternoon of the day preceding the Passover.

It is usually admitted that John gives the correct date. The Synoptic dating is uncertain, and here and there gives evidence of a tendency in the tradition to regard the death of Jesus as taking place on the Passover day (Matt. xxvi. 2; Mark xiv. 1; Luke xxii. 1), in spite of such statements as Mark xiv. 2; Luke xxii. 15, which point in the other direction. There is no need to suppose that John is either correcting the Synoptic tradition, or that his date is determined by a desire to represent Jesus as the true Paschal Lamb (cf. xix. 36 and notes). The assumption that Jesus was crucified on the Day of Preparation appears spontaneously in xiii. 27f., xviii. 28, xix. 14, 31, 42. The fact is embedded in the Johannine tradition so securely that it is impossible to doubt its truth, particularly in view of the Synoptic ambiguity.

Jesus knowing . . . girded himself. Verses 1-3 contain the principal elements of the Johannine theology; the *hour* (pp. 230f.), Jesus' love for *his own* (i. 11), *the Father had given all things into his hands* (iii. 35), *he came from God and went to God* (xvi. 28), *the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot* (xii. 31; xiii. 27). John makes use of this massing of theological propositions in order to bring out the great truth that this Divine self-consciousness of Jesus, confronted by the final assault of the devil directed through his instrument Judas, manifested itself not in a sovereign display of omnipotence, but in an amazing act of self-humiliation, described in *vv.* 4, 5. The Divine love so manifested was *to the uttermost* (*v.* 1 R.V.m.). Paul deals with the same theme

[1] See pp. 192f.

in Phil. ii. 5-11, a passage which should be carefully compared and studied. The Johannine language, like the Pauline, strikes a lyric note. There is a rhythm in xiii. 1-5, and also in the Philippian passage. All the great New Testament utterances about the person and work of Christ are not merely dogmas. They began as doxologies. (See note on *v.* 12.)

6-11 *What I do thou knowest not . . . hereafter.* The feet-washing must not be regarded merely as an example of humility, to be imitated by disciples. That is undoubtedly one aspect of the story. Much more is here implied. In Mark viii. 32f., Peter is rebuked sternly because he refuses to accept the teaching that the Cross is the way to the Messianic throne. Here we have a similar episode told in a more realistic way, and in the Johannine idiom. Peter by his refusal to accept this lowly act of service from Jesus, is denying the Christian faith. *Thou shalt know hereafter,* i.e. after the Resurrection and the coming of the Spirit, who *will take of mine and show them unto you* (xvi. 15). Refusal to accept means *thou hast no part with me.* The action of Jesus is not merely an example, but a cleansing (1 Ep. i. 7). *He that is bathed needeth not to wash* (R.V.m. This shorter reading is to be preferred. The longer one is an attempt to clarify the meaning.) The words sound like a proverbial saying. Peter, startled by Jesus' rebuke, has in his usual impulsive way, offered his whole body for cleansing. 'Do what thou wilt with me.' Jesus replies that he is already *bathed.* He is a disciple, and is wholly devoted to Jesus. It was his devotion that caused His remonstrance and provoked the rebuke in Mark viii. 33. Loyal as he is, he is weak at his strongest point. Because of the humiliation to his Master, he will not accept the Master's supreme gift. These men are all *clean* save one; i.e. fitted by their faith and loyalty to be Christ's disciples. Judas is fundamentally unclean, because of the treacherous purpose in his heart. The 'blood of Jesus' is said 'to cleanse from all sin' (1 John i. 7). 'Blood' means the life of Jesus yielded up in death. Paul also speaks, in Rom. vi. 3, of our being 'baptized into' the death of Christ, and what is really uppermost in his thought is that the love of Jesus in dying for him had overflowed

and overwhelmed his soul like a flood. He speaks of the Lord's Supper as a 'partaking of the blood of Christ' (1 Cor. x. 16). A similar idea is present in *v.* 10. Peter is already sitting at the Lord's Table. His impulsive and emotional change of attitude shows that he is *bathed* already in the Love so soon to die, and now—what he could not yet understand and therefore rejects—this love is kneeling at his feet in service. He has yielded himself in spirit to Christ; he must further yield himself in action. This love must *wash his feet,* remove life's travel-stains, and manifest its results in the common ways of life (cf. note on xvii. 19). The forgiveness of sin is much more than a doctrine gratefully and ever wonderingly accepted. It must be realized in repentance and the forgiveness of actual sins, of which we are made aware by the very presence and appeal of the Love that forgives. The travel-stains also are due to our own unforgiving spirit (Matt. vi. 12, 15).

Some commentators see in *bathed* (*leloumenos*) a reference to Baptism, and interpret the words as meaning that the baptized person needs only to wash, i.e. to receive cleansing from daily sin by partaking in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This, however, is not at all in keeping with the Fourth Evangelist's general attitude towards the sacraments, and is much too subtle.[1]

12-17 *Ye call me Master and Lord.* Jesus has again *taken his garments.* He is no longer *in the form of a servant* (Phil. ii. 7). He *sat down* (the posture of the teacher), and is again instructing His disciples with an authority which they recognize. Scholars addressed their teachers as 'Master and Lord'.[2] In the use of the word *Lord* the same theme appears as in Phil. ii. 10, 11. There Jesus wins His name as *Lord* by humiliating Himself. *He that is sent* is one word in the Greek —*apostolos,* 'apostle' (*v.* 16). This is the only use of the noun in the Gospel or in the First Epistle. Its use indicates that the title given to the delegates of the Christian Church at Jerusalem who undertook missionary journeys and founded

[1] Cf. Hoskyns *FG,* pp. 511f.
[2] SB II, p. 558.

churches, is in the Evangelist's mind.[1]

The episode of the feet-washing is now used as an ethical example. It appears likely that a lesson in humility may have been needed for 'apostles' in the Ephesian community (cf. 3 John 9f., and cf. notes on x. 1, 8-10). In xvii. 18 the 'sending' of the disciples is likened to the 'sending' of Jesus by the Father. The 'apostle' here is defined not as one to whom an official commission is given, but as one who represents his unseen Lord in spirit and character as fully as He, when on earth, represented the unseen God, the Father, in character, life and utterance.[2]

If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them. These things include not only ethical principles, but a spiritual knowledge of Christ Himself, His person and mission. This is the 'theology' which is indispensable for Christian ethics. We must have a clear conviction about the Person of Christ if we are to practise His teaching. We must also have a clear conviction of the Person of Christ in order that we may tell the world who He is, and why His teaching is to be preferred, say, to the teaching of H. G. Wells or any other modern prophet, and whence comes its authority. The doctrine of the Incarnation is based on the actual historical 'event' of the appearance of Jesus on earth as unique Son of God.[3] Selflessness and humility are mere illusions and futilities if the structure of the world in which we live is based on the possession of power by individuals or nations, and belongs to the strongest. Christ is our assurance that the power is God's, and that God's nature is His nature; that the practice of selflessness and humility is in accordance with the method of the omnipotent Divine Love.

(2) *The Unmasking of the Traitor. vv.* 18-30.

18 *I know whom I have chosen.* The treachery of Judas, like the denial of Peter (*vv.* 36-38) was no sudden surprise to

[1] The name 'apostle' was not confined to the Twelve. Cf. Kirsopp Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, V, 46ff.; E. D. Burton, *Galatians*, 363ff. The word here recalls the disciples to the inner meaning of the official title.

[2] Cf. H. T. Purchas, *Johannine Problems*, pp. 91f.

[3] Cf. D. L Sayers, *Creed or Chaos*, pp. 19ff.

Jesus. *He knew what was in man* (ii. 25). The quotation is from Psalm xli. 9. The metaphor represents an animal which is being fed, kicking its owner. Judas' treachery is a breach of the Divine hospitality. He has not merely eaten at the same table, but he has shared Christ's friendship, who is *the bread of life*. The quotation would not only strengthen Jesus' own soul, but it would be of apologetic use to the church as showing that even Judas' treachery was not outside the horizon of God's providence; 19 *I tell you before it come to pass*. Jesus guards the disciples' faith against the shock of the actual happening; *that ye may believe that I am* (R.V.m.). There is no predicate to *I am*.[1] Jesus speaks the language of Divinity and is given complete Divine power even over this treachery (cf. *v.* 27). 20 He reminds them that this shame which touched them all in the world's eyes, or any future contumely they may suffer, does not lessen their power of representing Him and revealing the Father to men.

22 *Doubting of whom he spake*. The synoptics describe a more personal reaction (Matt. xxvi. 22; Mark xiv. 19; Luke xxii. 23), where doubt becomes the deepest of all doubts doubt of themselves. Note the vivid *looked on one another*; lit. 'kept looking at one another', as if incredulously. 23 *Reclining in Jesus' bosom* (R.V.). 'To lie in the bosom' of anyone at a feast means 'sit next to'. The place was one of honour.[2] The same expression is used of Jesus' relation to God in i. 18, and the Evangelist in addition to pointing out John's place at the table, means that the same accord of mind and will existed between the Beloved Disciple and Jesus, as between Jesus and God (cf. xv. 9f.). According to custom, Jesus and the disciples were reclining at table, supported by the left elbow, using the right hand for eating. 25 Note the vivid change of position in *v.* 25. The Beloved Disciple is described as *leaning back, as he was, on Jesus' breast* (R.V.). The words translated *bosom* and *breast* are different. The one is the fold in the garment formed by the girdle. The other indicates that by his change of position, he actually

[1] On the 'I am' sayings, see pp. 19ff.

[2] 'Veiento was reclining next (the Emperor), yes even in his bosom' (*V. proximus atque etiam in sinu recumbebat.* Pliny, *Letters* IV. 22, 4.)

touched the body of Jesus, looking up as he spoke, without altering the recumbent position. This realistic detail suggests the touch of one who was present. 26 *When he had dipped the sop, he taketh and giveth it to Judas.* The offer of this piece of bread or meat dipped in the dish was a mark of special kindness, and may have been meant as a final appeal to Judas' better feelings. John's question was apparently whispered, and answered in a voice inaudible to the others. 27 The attention of all of them was diverted from the main topic by the action of giving the sop to Judas, and Jesus' words to him, *That thou doest, do quickly.* Apparently even John did not realize that the treacherous act was to take place immediately. Like the rest, he thought that Judas, by virtue of his position as treasurer of the small band, was sent at the moment to buy what was needed for the Passover before the market was closed, or to help some poor household to make the necessary purchases for their own celebrations. 'Jesus did not speak in this sense, but seeing him (i.e. Satan) who was entering in and had challenged Him and all the conspiracy against Him, stripped Himself for the contest, and that He might prevail for the salvation of men against the Evil One, he said, "That thou doest, do quickly." '[1] Origen's comment fully expresses the Evangelist's interpretation of the command given to Judas. Judas has become the instrument and emissary of Satan. Yet Judas, like Caiaphas (xi. 51f. and notes), has finally become the instrument of God. Jesus has voluntarily accepted God's will that He should die, and can therefore command Judas to carry out his nefarious purpose. *After the sop, Satan entered into him.* The conception is not that by thus 'unworthily partaking' of the sop, regarded as a sacramental symbol, Judas was given over to Satan, and incurred judgment to himself (1 Cor. xi. 27-29). There is no sacramental idea in the giving of the sop, save that it was a symbol of special friendship, Jesus' final appeal to Judas to refrain. The Evangelist means that the devil finally stifled any impression made on Judas by this final appeal, and took sole possession of his heart. 'The horrible mazes and inconsistencies of a spirit which contradicts itself and strives to

[1] Origen, *In Evangelium Joannis* xxxii. 23; cf. John xii. 31.

disobey the God whom yet it feels and acknowledges. To such a state of mind God becomes a contradiction. "With the froward"—O how true—"Thou wilt show thyself froward." God speaks once, and if that voice be not heard, but is wilfully silenced, the second time it utters a terrible permission. Experience will tell us how God has sent us to reap the fruit of our own wilfulness.'[1]

30 *It was night.* The Evangelist seems to make a similar use of a statement of time in xviii. 27, when he says that after Peter's denial, *immediately the cock crew.* The language in the latter case may also be symbolic. Judas betrayed Jesus, and his betrayal was his departure into the black mysterious night of judgment. Peter denied his Master, but his sin and repentance were for him the dawn of new hope and fruitful Christian service. 'Cock-crow' was early morning. Jesus made appeal to both men. How differently they responded! This Gospel passes severe judgment on the character and motives of Judas. (e.g. xii. 7, xiii. 2.)

(3) *The Farewell Discourses.* xiii. 31–xvi.

THE NATURE OF THE DISCOURSES (cf. pp. 17f.)

The words of xiv. 31 sound strangely, in view of the fact that the discourse is still continued in chapters xv, xvi. Some have attempted to explain the apparent interruption by transposing chapters xv–xvi to a place immediately after the words of xiii. 31a. *When therefore he was gone out*[2] (Moffatt, Bernard). xiii. 31b, however, is singularly appropriate as following the departure of Judas on his errand. Also xiv. 31 is equally inappropriate as immediately preceding chapter xvii. A simpler hypothesis is possible. If it be true that the gospel was left in an unfinished state, of which there are indications,[3], the hypothesis is possible that xiii. 31–xiv and xv–xvi represent two separate renderings by the Evangelist of a discourse uttered by Jesus at the Supper table.[4] Ideas

[1] F. W. Robertson, Sermon on *Balaam* (4th series), pp. 39f.
[2] Cf. on 'Dislocations', pp. 79ff.; Howard *FGRC*, pp. 125ff., 264.
[3] p. 81.
[4] The first rendering may be regarded as beginning at xiii. 31. xiii. 36-38 is not an interruption of the discourse, but corresponds to similar interruptions which characterize chapter xiv (*vv.* 5, 8, 22).

which occur in xiii. 31–xiv appear also in xv–xvi. These may be tabulated and compared:

1. *The Commandment of Love.* xiii. 34f. and xv. 12, 17; xiv. 10, 11, 15, 20f., and xv. 1-8, where the same theme is more figuratively elaborated by means of the imagery of the Vine and the Branches.

2. *Prayer.* xiv. 12-14, and xv. 7,16; xvi. 23.

3. *The Paraclete.* xiv. 16-18, 25f., and xv. 26; xvi. 7, 13, 14.

4. *The 'Little While'.* xiv. 19 (cf. *vv.* 2, 3), and xvi. 16. In xvi. 17-22 the meaning of the saying is expounded (see notes).

5. *The Prince of the World.* xiv. 27-31 and xvi. 11.

6. *Peace.* xiv. 27 and xvi. 31-33; xiii. 38 followed by xiv. 1 and xvi. 31, 32 (where not only of Peter but of all the disciples it is said that they will deny Jesus).

Note. (*a*) Both in xiv. 27-31, and xvi. 31-33, we have appropriate endings to a discourse. Also in these endings, the similarity of themes is remarkable. Note in both, the promise of *peace*, the reference to the timidity and apostasy of disciples, described realistically in xvi. 32; the theme of Jesus' unbroken communion with the Father, and His entire dependence on the Father's Will (xiv. 28; xvi. 32); anxiety about the faith of the disciples (xiv. 29; xvi. 31); the victory over the world (xvi. 33), over *the prince of the world* (xiv. 30).

(*b*) In xiii. 31–xiv individual disciples, who are named, ask questions. In xv–xvi individual disciples are never named but are represented as asking questions among themselves (e.g. xvi. 17f.). Jesus either overhears, or by Divine insight knows their questionings and answers. As with one voice the disciples assert that they understand, and express belief in Him. They are warned that their faith is imperfect, and has not yet stood the test of what is imminent (xvi. 29-32). I do not think that it need be assumed that these two versions of the Farewell Discourse are by different hands. It is much more likely that they represent different drafts by the Evangelist himself, which were inserted together at the time the gospel was given its final literary form.[1]

[1] The hypothesis of different drafts is also supported by the fact that Jesus' words in xvi. 5 are contradicted by xiii. 36-38, xiv. 5. An argument

The question of the literary form of these discourses is important. They are not to be regarded as free compositions of the Evangelist. The testimony of the centuries to the place which they have taken in the experience of Christians, makes it plain that readers have felt that they were listening to the voice of Christ Himself. We must, at the same time, recognize in the discourses a large element of interpretation. On the other hand, the mystical style of many of the sayings, and even the 'I' style of address, are paralleled in the Synoptic tradition (e.g. Matt. xi. 25-30. Compare Matt. xvi. 19 and John xiv. 12; also 'Whom say ye that I am?' Mark viii. 29 and parallels). Whilst the thought is more closely articulated than in the Synoptic utterances of Jesus, these discourses are full of those short pregnant sayings such as are found in the Synoptic Gospels. It is erroneous to quote Justin Martyr's remark on the sayings of Jesus, 'Brief and concise utterances fell from Him, for He was no sophist,'[1] as indicating that he did not know the Fourth Gospel. The content of many of the brief sayings in these discourses may often be paralleled from the Synoptic sayings (e.g. xiv. 13, Mark xi. 34; xiv. 17, Matt. x. 20). There are also partial verbal parallels (xiv. 31, Matt. xxvi. 46; xv. 6, Matt. xiii. 40; xv. 19, Matt. x. 22; xv. 20, Matt. x. 24f.; xv. 21, Mark xiii. 13; xv. 23, Luke x. 16; xvi. 23f. (cf. xiv. 13, xv. 7, 16), Matt. vii. 7; xvii. 15, Matt. vi. 13).

Luke is the only other Evangelist who narrates a discourse of Jesus to the disciples at the Supper (Luke xxii. 24-38). Of this discourse, *vv.* 24-30 contain sayings which are set in different contexts in Matthew. It is to be noted that while Luke (*v.* 24) suggests a context for the Johannine narrative of the feet-washing, the Fourth Evangelist in that narrative gives a context for the Lucan saying in *v.* 27, where a meal is suggested. There is also a certain similarity of theme and context with a portion of the Johannine discourse (xiii. 31-38). In Luke, the discourse is immediately prefaced by an 'unmasking of the traitor' (Luke xxii. 21-23). The prophecy of

against would be the introduction of the Paraclete in xvi. 7, 13, as if already mentioned (xiv. 16). Cf. W. Bauer, *Johannes-Evangelium*, second edition, p. 183; B. W. Bacon, *The Gospel of the Hellenists*, p. 218.

[1] *Apology* I. 14; cf. Drummond, *Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, Book II, chapter ii.

the denial of Peter, as in John, follows a protestation of his loyalty (Luke xxii. 33f., John xiii. 37f.; cf. Matt. xxvi. 33-35, Mark xiv. 29-31). There are one or two other striking reminiscences of the themes of the Lucan discourse in the Johannine discourses. Luke xxii. 28, 'Ye are they that have continued with me in my trials,' is reflected in the description of the disciples as 'friends' (John xv. 14, 15). In John xvi. 32 the scattering of the disciples is prophesied and is reminiscent of Luke xxii. 31, 32. Although in the latter passage Peter is personally addressed, the words are addressed to all (*sift you* is plural), and then Peter's own part in rallying the scattered band is prophesied. In John xiii. 36 his faithfulness unto death is predicted. These resemblances suggest that both Luke and John had access to similar traditions, but that John's alone contained the story of the feet-washing. It is fantastic to suggest, as Loisy does, that John constructs the story out of the sayings recorded in Luke xxii. 24, 27.[1]

We may therefore conclude that a tradition existed, witnessed to both by Luke and the Fourth Evangelist, that Jesus did address His disciples after the meal in the upper room. May we not also assume that the Fourth Evangelist expanded and interpreted Jesus' recorded words on that occasion?[2] It is here suggested that it was the custom that whoever presided at the Lord's Table was in the habit of giving an address after the example of the Lord Himself. The speaker would recall actual incidents and utterances of the upper room, interpret these, and also supplement them by sayings from other contexts. This may well have followed the 'narration' of the Lord's death mentioned in 1 Cor. xi. 26 (cf. p. 194).[3] The

[1] Other similarities between the Passion narrative in Luke and John may be noted. Satan entered into Judas (Luke xxii. 3, John xiii, 27); the Denial is predicted *in* the Upper Room (Luke xxii. 31ff.; John xiii. 36ff.); Jesus resorted to the Mount of Olives (Luke xxii. 39; John xviii. 1); the servant's *right* ear is cut off (Luke xxii. 50; John xviii. 10); Pilate three times acquits Jesus (Luke xxiii. 4, 14, 22; John xviii. 38; xix. 4, 6); the unused tomb (Luke xxiii. 53; John xix. 41). The independence of the tradition underlying the Johannine narrative can be amply attested. Cf. Taylor *FGT*, pp. 53f.

[2] On the teaching regarding the Spirit as founded on utterances of Jesus, see pp. 288f.

[3] The word translated 'proclaim' (R.V.) or 'show' (A.V.) in 1 Cor. xi. 26, might be translated 'recite' or 'narrate'. 'Some form of Passion-narrative,' it is suggested, 'accompanied the preaching of the Gospel and the

introduction to the story of the feet-washing (xiii. 1-3) may also have been characteristic of a 'solemn narration'. The word translated 'proclaim' (1 Cor. xi. 26 R.V.) is the word that Paul uses of his own preaching (1 Cor. ii. 1 R.V.). Paul is represented in Acts xx. 7 as giving a lengthy discourse after a celebration of the Lord's Supper. Paul also says that it was the habit to 'proclaim' the Lord's death, *until he come*. It is remarkable that both the 'going' and the 'coming again' of Christ to the believer are themes that recur in the Johannine farewell discourses. The betrayal spoken of by Jesus in the upper room, is evidently part of the tradition followed not only by Luke and John, but by Paul; 'on the night on which he was betrayed' (1 Cor. xi. 23). The stories of the betrayal and the denial by disciples would not be preserved for their own sake, but were much more likely to be retained in the Passion narrative, because Jesus actually spoke of both. The prospect of these happenings weighed heavily on His own heart. The earliest Christians recalled that the suffering and shame of Jesus were caused not only by enemies. 'He bore our sins in his own body on the tree' (1 Peter ii. 24) is not a merely dogmatic statement, but description of an historical event so far as the earliest believers were concerned. Others too, in times of persecution, were tempted to denial and betrayal of the Lord.

These discourses at the Lord's Table are prophetic in character. The Christian 'prophet' is recognized as 'given' by God to the Church (Eph. iv. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28). In the *Didache* (*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*), which may be dated before the end of the first century A.D., itinerant Christian prophets are regarded as the appropriate persons to preside at the Lord's Supper. They are spoken of as 'your chief-priests' (*Didache* 13). Are these Farewell Discourses the utterances of a Christian prophet?[1] Is he the Evangelist himself? If so, the utterances are those of one who is possessed by the Spirit of truth, which *leads into all the truth* (John xvi. 13), and interprets the mind of the risen Christ

celebration of the Sacrament.' (C. H. Dodd, *History and the Gospel*, pp. 82f.)

[1] I am indebted for this suggestion to Mr. A. C. Macpherson, in a paper read by him at Professor C. H. Dodd's Seminar. Harris, *Didache*, 69f., 86f.

under the guidance of the Spirit. The prophet also offered a prayer, both before and after the partaking. A form of words for both is given in the *Didache* (9, 10), but the prophet is to have liberty to expand; 'Permit the prophets to offer thanksgiving as much as they desire.' That he should so speak in Christ's name and stead, and use the personal pronoun 'I'[1] is no more remarkable than that the Old Testament prophet should similarly speak in God's name (cf. Isaiah xli. 8ff., etc.).

In Mark xiii. we have an example of the utterance of a Christian prophet. The chapter is cast in the form of an apocalyptic utterance guaranteed by the authority of four leading disciples, Peter, James, John and Andrew (*v.* 3). It contains material derived from conventional Christian apocalyptic, but in the opinion of competent scholars, it embodies actual words of Jesus on the future.[2] The coming of the Son of man (*v.* 26) is preceded by certain Messianic tribulations, which are not to be mistaken for God's final 'end' or purpose. Those for whom Mark wrote are also reassured that Jesus had foreseen from the first, days of suffering and persecution (Mark xiii. 6f., 13, 23, 33, 35, 37). These are the prelude to the consummation of the Divine purpose realized in the coming of the Son of man in power. In the Johannine discourses, the coming of the Son of man is represented as the coming of the Paraclete in the heart of the Church. The motif, *I have told you beforehand,* also reappears (John xiv. 2, 29; xv. 18-21; xvi. 1-4). The Johannine version of the tribulations as the birthpangs of a new age when Christ Himself will be eternally present with His Church appears in xvi. 20-22. The discourse of Mark xiii. is set in the framework of traditional words of Jesus, some of which are found in Matthew and Luke in other contexts. Similarly the Johannine discourses may be regarded as reproductions, expansions, and interpretations of traditional sayings. In the latter, however, there is an artistry of style and an articulation of thought which are Johannine, and not characteristic of the traditional prophetic form of speech as exemplified in Mark xiii.

[1] On the 'I' style of speech, see pp. 19ff.
[2] Cf. A. E. J. Rawlinson, *Mark*, pp. 177ff.

These Farewell Discourses, and also the prayer of chapter xvii, may thus be regarded as the utterance[1] of a great Christian prophet, presiding at the Lord's Table. This would explain why the Christ in whose name they are spoken, is one not only about to be glorified, but who is already glorified. For Him already, the bitterness of death is over, and He has left behind the weakness of mortality. The prophet is proclaiming to hearers who were themselves in loneliness, anxiety, or distress through persecution, and whose faith in Christ's presence and power and love was sorely tried, that Jesus has gone away only in order to return to them in power and love, as He now does at His own Table; that their condition was anticipated with solicitous forethought in words addressed to His own disciples in similar plight.

THE FAREWELL DISCOURSES. Part I. xiii. 31–xiv.

The New Commandment. vv. 31-35.

31 The betrayal of Judas is the first step in the 'glorification' of Jesus. Jesus has been manifesting in His ministry the glory of God, which is also His own glory, delegated to Him by the Father (cf. ii. 11; xvii. 4, 5, 22). *Now* is emphatic. The *hour* inaugurated by an act of treachery as it would appear to the non-Christian, is really the moment when God's redemptive activity reaches its climax. 32 *God is glorified in him* (cf. xii. 28; xiv. 13; xv. 8). The R.V. is to be preferred in *v.* 32. *God shall glorify him in himself. In himself* refers to God, not to Jesus. The Passion of Christ is no isolated occurrence, something merely that happened two thousand years ago, but is seen to be a timeless element in God's eternal redemptive activity. It is an historical event, which is beyond history, and determines the subsequent history of the Christian believer and Christian society.

33 Jesus' thought now turns to His disciples, whom, as Head of the family on earth—the Church—He addresses as *Little children.* The diminutive (*teknia*) is really equivalent to 'my children', and was frequently used by the rabbi addressing his pupils. In the Old Testament, God frequently

[1] Duplicate utterances, included in the final text (pp. 81f.).

addresses His people as 'children' (cf. Is. lxiii. 8). These disciples are the 'church in miniature', the Israel of God. 34 To them is given *a new commandment*. It is *new* because the source and nature of their love in obedience to the commandment is new. *Love* is the basis of all Christian conduct. The new Israel is here given the new *Torah*, in the form of a summary that can be expressed in one word, 'Love' (*agapē*). That love has its source and pattern in the redemptive activity of God in Christ. Love is the *fulfilling of the law* (i.e. 'the full content') (Rom. xiii. 10); *the bond of perfectness* (Col. iii. 14). *We love because he first loved us* (1 John iv. 19 R.V.; cf. iv. 11). The early Christians chose the most colourless word for 'love' in the Greek vocabulary (*agapē*), because other words for the same (e.g. *erōs*) were associated with unsuitable or inadequate meanings in popular speech, in order to express the new moral demands of the Christian faith. The New Testament conception of 'love' is to be regarded as the organizing power of the various instinctive impulses and emotions directing human relationships. It is what psychologists call a 'sentiment'.[1] It is delivered from all saccharine or merely emotional interpretations by the fact that its character is determined by the Christian belief in God, and its pattern fixed in the example and teaching of Jesus. *Even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another* (R.V.). Because this love is derived from and motived by the *glorification* of Jesus—a unique event—it is *new* and ever needing renewal by communion with Him, or 'abiding in Him'. It is the *fruit of the true vine* (xv. 4, 8). It is at the same time a spirit of discipleship which witnesses to the world that the invisible Christ has ascended in power (*vv.* 33, 35).[2]

The Denial by Peter foretold. vv. 36-38.

The Fourth Gospel makes use of the same pattern as the Synoptics, in constructing his Passion narrative. Judas'

[1] Cf. A. F. Shand, *The Foundations of Character*, pp. 55ff.; also some pages in my own book, *The Authority of Christian Experience*, pp. 53ff.

[2] The limitless demand on Christian love in the form of 'forgiveness unto seventy times seven', for which no definite directions can be laid down, is significantly followed by the prayer, 'Lord, increase our faith' (Luke xvii. 4, 5).

treachery and Peter's denial are included in it. Over both the Divine Love triumphed. Both were foreseen by Jesus. Not only is the disconcerting fact that even in the ranks of the twelve there was a traitor and a recreant thus answered when it was brought forward by opponents of the Christian message;[1] the stories of Judas and Peter also proved that in the very heart of the Church there might lurk apostasy, as it has often done, and yet the cause and the message are not defeated and discredited. *God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things* (1 John iii. 20).

36 *Lord, whither goest thou?* Note the use made of these words (*Domine, quo vadis?*) in the legend of Peter's death (*Acts of Peter and Paul* 82). 37 *Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?* Compare Peter's words in Mark xiv. 31. The word translated 'follow' has here a double meaning. The word had come to have the added significance of dying a martyr's death (cf. xxi. 18, 19; also Mark viii. 34). All the stories about Peter's weakness conjoined with self-confidence in the Gospels are told by and to those who knew that Peter had already (probably in Rome, A.D. 54) become a martyr. Peter, however, cannot *follow now*. Only the death and victory of Jesus, soon to be accomplished, could brace the hearts of Christian martyrs, asked to lay down their lives for a cause that seemed already lost.

The Many Mansions. xiv. 1-3.

1 *Let not your heart be troubled.* These words are significant, as following immediately after xiii. 36-38. Peter's own heart must have been *troubled* on account of the exposure of his innate weakness, and of that still lurking resentment against the Cross as the appointed way for the Master to whom he was so deeply attached (Mark viii. 32, 33). The rest must have been *troubled* by the announcement of xiii. 21. A traitor cannot remain in their fellowship (*v.* 30), but will

[1] It is apparent that the Passion narratives in the Gospels are so constructed as to provide a careful and articulated account of the happenings in the upper room, and at the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. The earliest preachers and teachers realized that the story of the Cross presented serious difficulties to their hearers, inasmuch as a crucified Messiah is the central figure in a message of salvation. See Taylor *FGT*, pp. 47f.

Peter also forfeit his place as a disciple of Christ? And what will happen to themselves, should the coming trial prove too much for them, in their present bewildered mood? *Believe in God, believe also in me* (R.V.m.). So the words should read. Although any of them should forfeit the claim to be loyal disciples, Jesus does not 'cast them out'. They are asked to *believe* in Him, as One who will remain true, in spite of their weakness. But is He not about to die? Then, *believe in God*, God's love and purpose are unshakeable, and manifest in the Cross. 2 *My Father's house* is not to be interpreted merely in terms of the future life in heaven (cf. viii. 35). 'The "house of the Father" and the "Kingdom of God" are not separate conceptions. The expression "house" corresponds to the name "Father", the expression "kingdom" to the name given to the King' (Schlatter). The *mansions* are 'abiding places' for the soul, here and now. There are *many mansions* for weak and sinful men in the spacious love and forgiveness of God, incarnate and visible in the person of Jesus. 'My going away in such a fashion as fills your heart with fears and doubts, means that *I go to prepare a place for you.*'

For the love of God is broader
  Than the measure of man's mind.
And the heart of the Eternal
  Is most wonderfully kind.

If it were not so, I would have told you.[1] The words almost imply that *if it were not so*, Jesus' own faith would have been tried and He could not have thus spoken, knowing what was to happen in that chosen company, the nucleus of His church on earth. 3 *I come again . . . there ye may be also.* Again, the words are not to be interpreted exclusively of the death of the disciples, but also of their communion with the risen Lord on earth, through the Holy Spirit. The Evangelist believes in the final advent of Jesus (xxi. 22, 23; v. 27-29; 1 John ii. 28) as well as in present fellowship with Him (xiv. 18, 21, 23). The Paraclete becomes the sign of His

[1] 'Mansions' really means 'abiding places'. See the note on *v.* 2 in Bernard *ICC*. 'Would I have told you that . . .?' is a possible version.

presence (xv. 26). 'Life eternal' begins here and now for the Christian.

Disciples' Questions. vv. 4-11.

4, 5 *Whither I go, ye know the way* (R.V.). On Thomas see note on xx. 24. His reply suggests a mind which moves stubbornly amid spatial conceptions. 'In his eyes the journey must be like one from land to land or, as we might say, from planet to planet.'[1] His eyes are fastened on 'things that are seen', which for Paul included his own sufferings, the apparent failure of his mission, the sorrows of the world, the seeming lack of providential purpose (2 Cor. iv. 18). Thomas's question also is the question of a man for whom the 'things unseen' are just everything that is hidden from mortal eyes, and not, as for Paul and this Evangelist, the living person of Jesus in 'the flesh', but now reigning and triumphant as our living Representative or 'Paraclete' over all that makes us doubting and afraid (cf. Heb. ii. 9). 6 *I am the way, and the truth, and the life* (R.V.). Jesus is *the way* because He is *the truth*, the personal self-revelation of God; *the life* which sustains men on their way to God, and keeps alive their trust in the Father. The way to God may be a way of suffering and temptation. Jesus Himself has trodden that way, becoming the way to God for all. Compare the term 'Way' as a designation of Christianity (Acts ix. 2; xix. 9, 23; xxii. 4; xxiv. 22).

In Hellenistic religion there was a widespread conception of what is called 'the journey of the soul'. The souls of men have descended from heaven originally, and by their incorporation in human bodies have lost their divine qualities. To reach again their real home, they must after death make a long and weary journey through the spheres of the planets, becoming purified so that they may be fit to enter into the Kingdom of light. There is also a belief in some divine leader who gives help to the soul in its wandering flight. The theme pervades many Gnostic writings.[2] The Johannine conception of the 'Way' may have in view such conceptions.

[1] F. J. A. Hort, *The Way, the Truth and the Life*, p. 15.
[2] Cf. E. Bevan, *Stoics and Sceptics*, pp. 105ff.

As a Christian missionary, the Evangelist was sensitive to pagan religious thought, and this teaching about Jesus as the Way which can be entered upon and trodden now, just in so far as the soul is in living communion with Him, would carry its own appeal.

8 *Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.* On *Philip* see p. 119. Is Philip represented as seeking a vision of God such as Moses desired? (Exod. xxxiii. 18). 9 *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.* Jesus reminds Philip of their past companionship, and of His own reiterated teaching that both His words and His works are wrought by power delegated to Him by the Father (e.g. xiv. 20, 24). 10 *How sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* Our conception of the Fatherhood of God requires continually to be corrected by deeper understanding of Jesus' teaching, and observation of His own personality. Otherwise we fall into expansive sentimentality. Only disciples of Christ have the right to call God 'Father'. 'God is for Jesus the Father of those who share his fellowship, not of all men generally. . . . The Fatherhood of God as applied by Jesus to men implies the moral and ethical relationships which Jesus inspired in his group of personal followers, of whom therefore God approved. . . . Nowhere (in his teaching) is there any trace of the idea that men by birth are, as such, sons of God or brothers one of another in the full sense of these terms.'[1] The Christian doctrine of the Fatherhood of God is not synonymous with the equally true doctrine of the universal love of God towards all men. More than words are required to enable men fully to enter into the relationship of 'children of God' and to call Him 'Father'. The mediation of Jesus is needed (i. 12; cf. xiv. 6).

The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth his works (R.V.). 11 . . . *Or else believe me for the very works' sake.* Compare v. 36. The 'works' are *his works*, i.e. God's works, done through the agency of Christ. Both the 'works' and the 'words' of Jesus in this Gospel are described as Divine agencies. His words are 'spirit and life' (vi. 63). They are

[1] J. Moffatt, *Love in the New Testament*, pp. 69f.

creative words (iii. 34). Thus we should approach the words, *I am in the Father and the Father in me.* The doctrine of the interpenetration of the personalities of the Father and the Son is the result of spiritual experience and observation of the words and works of Jesus. These are not to be confined to the earthly ministry. What the Church and the individual Christian has accomplished and still accomplishes, cannot be accounted for, save by the belief that Christ still works and speaks as the Divine Agent of God in the lives of believers.

Prayer and Conduct. vv. 12-14.

Belief in Christ has results both in (*a*) Conduct (*v.* 12) and (*b*) Prayer (*vv.* 13-14).

12 (*a*) *Conduct. He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father.* The death and resurrection of Jesus is His ascension to power, and the setting free of that power for the whole world. As ascended, Christ no longer belongs to one nation. The founding and extension of the Christian Church, at home and abroad, belong to these *greater works,* and also the spread of Christian faith and teaching. Faith in Christ will be kindled in others by the life and achievements, the teaching and preaching, the example of His followers in the days to come. The Apostolic Church is in the mind of the speaker. Yet the *greater works* are still Christ's works. They are still *the works that I do.* Only they are greater, *because I go to the Father.* The disciples will have at their disposal the whole power of the risen and ascended Christ, the inspiration and illumination of the Spirit (cf. v. 20). The Christian Church is not promised 'tasks equal to its power, but power equal to its tasks'.

(*b*) *Prayer.* We may here summarize the teaching of Jesus on Prayer in this Gospel:

(1) xiv. 13, 14; xvi. 23, 24. Prayer must be 'in Christ's name'. A man's 'name' once described a man. He was called 'black' or 'white' or 'gray' because the words suggested some feature of the man himself. So the name of Christ suggests that we 'know' Christ, for what He is and does. The use of His name is not magical. We know what

His will is, because we love Him, and *keep* (rather 'observe') *his commandments* (xiv. 15). The knowledge of Christ's teaching will be of infinite help, but we cannot understand its meaning and application to new situations without *love*, whole-hearted devotion. Thus to pray in Christ's name is to pray that we or others may do or have just what He wills. 'What are the things I may seek in prayer, the limits within which I may pray?' The answer is determined by our knowledge of Christ Himself, and the fact that prayer in accordance with His will is also in accordance with God's will (cf. ix. 31; xi. 41; 1 Ep. v. 14). Thus prayer in Christ's name is disciplined prayer.

(2) xv. 7. We must *abide* in Christ, if our prayers are to be answered. A man may so *abide* or be absorbed in the market-place, or so dwell among books, or so become accustomed to use only fixed forms of prayer, as to lose touch with the mind and purpose of Christ *for his own day*. He may even know Christ 'after the flesh', as He lived and taught in Galilee, and forget that situations are to-day presented for prayer and decision, which are mirrored in no recorded incident or saying in the Gospels. This makes new demands on the spirit of prayer. We must therefore learn to dwell not only where Christ used to be, but where He is now. 'It is not I that live, but Christ liveth in me.' If to us 'to live is Christ', it shall be given us in hours of crisis 'what we shall say' and also what we shall do. *Ask whatsoever ye will* (cf. xiv. 13) means not merely *whatsoever* Jesus of Nazareth willed and prayed for, but *whatsoever* may be demanded of you as a Christian disciple, *in His name*, in an entirely new situation without precedent (cf. 1 Cor. ii. 16). The Spirit *shall teach you all things* (xiv. 26). *All things* include all that present Christian duty demands. Compare, *greater things than these shall he do* (xiv. 12).

(3) Be ready to answer your own prayers. This will cost. Compare xvii. 19; *For their sakes I sanctify myself*. Jesus consecrates Himself in prayer to the service of His disciples, and makes Himself ready to love unto death. He also prays that His disciples may be willing to devote themselves to the same service, that they may be *sanctified in truth*, i.e. recog-

nizing only such limits as are set by God's love, which is *the truth*. Our prayers are sometimes limited by our own shrinking from cost involved if they are to be answered.

(4) *Corporate Prayer.* xvii. 21-23. The unity of which Jesus here speaks is much more than external unity, but unity of mind and purpose with fellow-Christians as well as with God. We realize this best in corporate prayer, led with imagination. In corporate prayer, particularly intercessory prayer, as in all corporate worship, we discover most fully the vast sweep of God's will and purpose for the world, and the vastness of its need. Prayer may become self-centred, the mere expression of a desire to be 'alone with God'.

The Paraclete. vv. 15-24.

16 *Another Comforter.* 'Comforter' is a misleading translation of the Greek *paraclētos*—'paraclete', due to the fact that the corresponding verb (*parakaleō*) may mean 'comfort'. The original meaning of Paraclete is 'one called in to aid'. The word has been transliterated into Aramaic, and is used in certain Jewish targums. That on Job xvi. 20 reads, 'My paraclete should be my friends.' The opposite of 'paraclete' is 'accuser'. In Latin the equivalent is *advocatus*, 'advocate' (so translated 1 John ii. 1). In ordinary Greek usage, the 'paraclete' was not a pleader briefed and paid by his client. 'He was his patron and standing counsel, the head of the order or of the clan to which both belonged, bound by the claims of honour and family association to stand by his humble dependant, and to see him through.'[1]

Accusations and charges were brought against the disciples in Jesus' lifetime by the rabbinical authorities, inasmuch as they did not keep the law (Mark ii. 23; vii. 2), and consented to Jesus' association with 'publicans and sinners'. Their attitude would be interpreted as 'keeping His commandments', or following His teaching (*v.* 15). On these occasions Jesus defended them, was their 'Paraclete'. The accusations ultimately came to rest on Himself. Now, as He

[1] G. C. Findlay, *Fellowship in the Life Eternal*, p. 117; quoted by V. Taylor, *The Atonement in Modern Thought*, p. 218. For a full discussion of the term 'Paraclete' see Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. III, 665.

is leaving them, apparently 'orphans' ('desolate' R.V. *v.* 18), they need 'another Paraclete'. 17, 18 This they will find in *the Spirit of Truth*, who will be their champion against hostility on account of their adherence to His teaching or *commandments* (cf. Mark xiii. 11; Matt. xxiv. 9; Luke xxi. 15; cf. note on xvi. 8-11). The most serious controversy of all will be due to the fact that Jesus was crucified as a criminal (1 Cor. i. 23), and that they claimed to be His witnesses. The Paraclete will vindicate them before the judgment of man. That vindication will take place, not only because of the sense of the living presence of Christ with them (cf. 2 Tim. iv. 17), but because the impression would be produced on their enemies that He was, in them, alive and active, the source of their courage and faith, and of the new movement that had begun (cf. Acts iv. 13; cf. John xvi. 8). Dangers confronted in His service will always be met by the coming of the Paraclete; *that he may be with you for ever* (*v.* 16).

The fulfilment of the promise takes place after the Resurrection, and *is* the Resurrection in their experience. 19 *Yet a little while* is a prophetic expression, indicating that Divine action is imminent (Is. x. 25; Jer. li. 33), in judgment or in deliverance.[1] 20, 21 *In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.* This experience of complete oneness with Christ, as He is one with the Father, is most real when they 'keep' or fearlessly 'observe' Christ's commandments in spite of opposition. *In that day* refers not to Pentecost only, but to the new 'age' of spiritual power that is introduced by the ascension of Jesus to the Father. 22 The question of *Judas* (*not Iscariot*) means 'How will Jesus appear to us, and not to the rest of the world?' The transmutation of the belief in a visible Parousia (see pp. 11f.) into an appearance in the heart of the believer underlies the thought. 23 Judas evidently feels that it would be more effective if Jesus would manifest Himself so that all men might see Him. The answer is that the whole power of the Godhead is present in the life and witness of a faithful believer (cf. xvii. 21f.); *we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* Such witness conquers the world (1 John v. 4-10).

[1] Cf. pp. 296f.

A final promise of Peace and Victory. vv. 25-31.

25, 26 Verses 25, 26 are significant in view of the character of this gospel. Three elements are said to be present in the tradition of Jesus' words: (*a*) Jesus' own words (*v.* 25). (*b*) The teaching or interpretation of the Spirit. (*c*) The illuminated memory of those who preserved it (*v.* 26). The words really expose the Evangelist's own mind towards his interpretation of Jesus' words.

30 *The Prince of the world cometh* (R.V.). 'What sleepy conscience, what moral mediocrity, itself purblind, only dimly conscious of the height of the Christian calling, and vexed by no aspirations towards it, has any right to say that it is too much to call Satan "the god of this world"? Such sleepy consciences have no idea of the omnipresence, the steady persistent pressure, the sleepless malignity, of the evil forces which beset man's life. . . . Call such powers Satan, or what you please, but do not imagine that they are inconsiderable. During this age they *reign*; they have virtually taken what should be God's place in the world.'[1]

Hath nothing in me; 'hath no power over me', or 'has no claim on me', as One who never yielded to temptation.

31 In Johannine thought, Jesus' voluntary submission to sinful men and a shameful death at their hands, men who are Satan's instruments, is like the action of a divinely-commissioned protagonist who goes to meet him in single combat, sure of victory (cf. Col. i. 13; ii. 15). *Arise, let us go hence.*

The Spirit in the Johannine and Synoptic Teaching.

The doctrine of the Spirit appears in the Primitive preaching as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. It would be strange if the earliest disciples were able to speak of the Pentecostal happenings (Acts ii. 15-21) as the coming of the 'Spirit', and to connect it closely with the risen and ascended Jesus as Him by whom it was poured forth (Acts ii. 33), unless there had been something in the teaching of Jesus Himself to prepare them for this use of the term. The place which is given to the conception of the Spirit on the lips of

[1] J. Denney, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 150.

Jesus in the Johannine teaching, suggests that there was a stronger tradition of actual teaching by Jesus on the subject than is apparent in the Synoptic Gospels. In Luke Jesus speaks of 'the promise of the Father', and of being 'clothed with power from on high' (xxiv. 49). In Acts i. 4f. the promise of the Father is again mentioned, and it is interpreted by Jesus as baptism 'with the Holy Spirit'. In the Q document used in common by Matthew and Luke (Matt. x. 19; Luke xxi. 15), we find the promise of guidance by the Spirit in the same context as that in John xv. 26f. The context is persecution. Compare John xvi. 1f., and Mark xiii. 11. Another version of the Synoptic sayings is found in Matt. x. 20; Luke xii. 12. There is also the saying about 'blasphemy' against the Holy Spirit (Mark iii. 29; Luke xii. 10; Matt. xii. 32). This can only refer to an experience of spiritual power present in the personality of Jesus Himself, which is blasphemously interpreted by His enemies as Satanic. Other references to the Spirit in the Synoptic Gospels are Mark xiii. 11; Mark xii. 36; Luke xi. 13; Matt. xii. 28.

The comparative silence of Jesus on the Holy Spirit in the Synoptic Gospels has suggested to some that the prominence given to the doctrine in the Fourth Gospel on the lips of Jesus is a reading back of later experience and reflection. On the other hand, the Johannine teaching that the Spirit was given only after Jesus was crucified (vii. 39), may be based on the fact of Jesus' comparative silence on the subject. May it not have been as difficult for Jesus to speak about the Spirit as about His Messiahship? No conception of the latter answered to His own, which could not be defined except in terms of the Cross. Similarly 'the whole conception of the Spirit in the Old Testament must needs be baptized into the death of Christ. Calvary was the only gateway to Pentecost.'[1]

In the Farewell Discourses, the Holy Spirit or Paraclete appears as practically equivalent to the presence of the risen and exalted Jesus—His *alter ego* (xiv. 16-18, 25; xvi. 7). We

[1] R. N. Flew, *Jesus and His Church*, pp. 70f.; Howard *FGRC*, p. 229. I am indebted to Dr. Flew's book at several points in this paragraph.

may compare Paul's words, 'The Lord is the Spirit' (2 Cor. iii. 17, R.V.). There is undoubtedly a strong element of interpretation in the Johannine thought, based on the fact that the experience of the Spirit was creative and dominant in the early community, and was regarded as equivalent to the living presence of Christ Himself as well as deriving from Him. It is, however, implicit in the prophecy of Jesus before His judges (Mark xiv. 62 and parallels) that there would come a perfected experience of the power of God, mediated through Himself as crucified, risen, and ascended to the right hand of God; judgment to those who condemned Him, and to His disciples a new Divine energy. Note the way in which the conception of exaltation to the right hand of God and the 'pouring forth' of the Spirit are blended in the thought of Acts ii. 33. Note also how the ideas of exaltation, sin, and judgment are blended in John xvi. 8-11. The Johannine teaching on the Spirit is firmly based both on the consciousness of Jesus, and on the experience of the early Church. It is an interpretation of recorded words of Jesus.

THE FAREWELL DISCOURSES. Part II. xv–xvi.

The Vine and the Branches. xv. 1-6.

1, 2 In the language of the prophets, the nation is spoken of as God's 'vine' or 'vineyard' (Is. v. 1-7; Jer. ii. 21; Ezek. xv. 1-6; xix. 10-14; Ps. lxxx. 8-16). Compare also Matt. vii. 16-20; xii. 33; xx. 1; xxi. 28-43. *The true vine* and its *branches* represent together the new Society, in which all the care and promises of God given to the ancient chosen nation come to fulfilment. The speaker has in mind not only the individual's relation to Himself, but his membership of the new society, the Church. *The true vine* is the vine that *bears fruit* (*vv.* 4, 5). Israel has not borne fruit (cf. Matt. xxi. 19). *He cleanseth it* (R.V.), rather 'pruneth it'. The denial of Peter and the experience it brought him was his 'pruning' that he might *bear more fruit.* The *fruit* which the disciples are expected to bear is not merely excellencies of character, but a will and capacity for service.

They are sent out on a mission to bring others into the community. Theirs is the mission on which the Father had sent His Son (xv. 16; xvii. 18; iv. 38). Judas forfeited his mission and became a *withered* branch (*v.* 6). He is 'cast out' in the same act as *when he went out and it was night* (xiii. 30; 3, 4 cf. vi. 37). The other disciples are *clean.* Jesus has given them His *word,* which is the Word made flesh, i.e. the personal word of God (xvii. 14). They abide in Him. These men are ennobled and cleansed by their mission and message. Verse 3 and xiii. 10 should be pondered together. 'Jesus washed the feet of those that were clean, and to those to whom He promised cleansing, He said, Ye are clean' (Schlatter). Underlying the thought, there is the conception of Jesus as Judge. He alone can pronounce men *clean.* His is a Divine prerogative. Unfruitfulness alone separates men from Christ and His Church. The Church without a sense of mission is no church. A similar idea underlies Paul's conception of Christians as 'the body of Christ'. Through our bodies we make contact with the outer world (cf. p. 292).

The Mission of the New Society. vv. 7-16.

7 *If . . . my words abide in you.* Note the substitution of *my words* for 'I' of *v.* 5. It was through His *words* that these men experienced the power of His personality. His *words* are the Word of God, and do not cut the air and vanish. They 'accomplish the thing whereto they are sent' (Is. lv. 11; cf. xiv. 10; vi. 63). Note the recurrence of the same conjunction of ideas in *vv.* 7, 8 as in xiv. 12-14. 9, 10 Compare note on xiii. 34. 11 *That my joy might remain.* The joy of Jesus springs from the fact that when He *lays down His life,* He does so in full accord with and obedience to the will and purpose of God for the redemption of men. In other words, He has the assurance that His self-sacrifice is effective and 'does not return unto Him void' (cf. Is. liii. 11. Translate 'He shall see . . . and be satisfied by his knowledge'). He communicates this joyful assurance to His disciples as He sends them out on their mission in His service. Their joy also *will be fulfilled,* i.e. their work will not be in vain (cf. xvi. 24; xvii. 13). 14 As *friends* of Jesus, they also will

be called on to *lay down their lives for the brethren* (1 John iii. 16); not as a mere heroic duty, but as Jesus' envoys and as sharing his own confidence of victory. *No longer do I call you servants.* Their mission is to be accomplished in no spirit of blind fanatical devotion, no slave spirit. 15 Their Leader communicated to them all the Divine plan and purpose for the Church; *all things that I have heard of my Father.* Their devotion is not to a mere baseless ideology, religious or political. 'Friend of Caesar' was an official title conferred on distinguished persons. Is Jesus here represented as elevating His disciples to the rank of 'friends of Christ'?[1] Many of the early Christians were actually slaves, and felt themselves thus ennobled. Their new rank, however, is to be displayed in self-forgetting service. They are friends of Christ, inasmuch as they are called to share His suffering, and thus to bear fruit (*v.* 16; cf. Luke xxii. 25f.).

16 *Ye did not choose me, but I chose you* (R.V.); a word both of command and encouragement. The enterprise of spreading the Christian faith, the belief that Christianity is the absolute and final religion, are not humanly conceived. The whole conception of a witnessing and missionary church is Christ's, and not the mere stubborn human conviction of men seeking to propagate their own views.

Persecution. vv. 17-27.

17 This section consists of a series of sayings, intended to strengthen the Church in days of ostracism or active persecution. Such days often produce discord and strain within the society itself. There would be those of lesser faith who would be inclined to blame others for their hardships, or, losing heart, in other ways would need the ministry of their fellows. Hence the exhortation to *love one another.* The bearing of Christians toward one another would make its own impress on their persecutors. 18 *If the world hateth you, know ye that it hath hated me before it hated you* (R.V.m.).[2] Paul

[1] See note on xix. 12.

[2] The word 'hate' is used in Luke xiv. 26 of giving up family ties for Christ's sake Cf. John xii. 25. Clearly the word there means relinquishing what is of great value for that which is of infinitely greater worth. Here the word is used in its full strength.

found consolation in recalling the suffering and death of Jesus in his own times of extremity. Note the recurrence of the personal name Jesus in 2 Cor. iv. 10 (R.V.m.)-14. The picture here is of a Church which by its witness and life attacks the world's most cherished values. 19 To be *not of the world* is to live a separate life, but not in the clouds. It means personal contact with a world that realizes that we are there, custodians of a message and of values greater and dearer than life itself. 20 There is a word of encouragement and hope in the closing words of verse 20. *If they kept my word, they will keep yours also* (R.V.). The Church's mission is not to be unsuccessful. Christ's mission did not end in utter failure. Complete renunciation of the world, because the world's principles are not yours, is not a mark of the Church. It is true that a Church which is perfectly at home in a world of things as they are has nothing to give it which could not be gained without it. Yet if a Church 'does not live in the actual world, to direct its enterprises and redeem its values, religion has equally no message for it'.[1]

22-25 The thought here is centred around the familiar conception that the coming and ministry of Jesus in the flesh are the only medium through which men can know God as Father, and come into personal relationship with Him. The rejection of this personal relationship thus mediated, offered by God Himself (iii. 16), inevitably involves guilt. *If I had not come and spoken . . . if I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin*, i.e. 'would not be guilty'. To make the Divine nature and mission of Jesus Christ an open question, or an abstract theological question on which decision is not vital, is to make the Church and its message morally innocuous. The sense of guilt becomes easily confused with remorse, or with failure to reach 'the highest we know'. Sin is not baffled idealism but sheer rebellion against God, Who has invaded the life of men in this personal way in Jesus Christ, in order to make His will known, and to establish a new personal relationship of love with His children. To 'hate' a Christ who seeks to be known only in terms of His Divine nature and mission,

[1] F. R. Barry, *The Relevance of Christianity*, p. 169.

is to *hate my Father also. Now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.*

The Paraclete in Persecution. xvi. 1-15. (On xv. 26, 27 see notes on xiv. 16-18.)

xvi. 1-4 These verses are largely a reiteration and expansion of thoughts that appear in the previous chapter. *That ye may not be made to stumble.* The enmity of the world and its methods are now more sharply defined (*v.* 2), so that the disciples may feel that Jesus actually realized the suffering their mission in His name would involve, and did not merely speak of suffering generally. With clear eyesight and vision, He concerned Himself just with those things that had already happened to them. The experience of excommunication from the synagogue would be a bitter one for the earliest disciples, inasmuch as they still cherished their Jewish inheritance and worship. 5 *None of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?* The spiritual world into which Jesus was about to enter was as yet unreal and uncertain to the disciples. Later they spoke confidently of Jesus, as He spoke of Himself (Mark xiv. 62), as 'at the right hand of God' (Acts ii. 33). This meant that He is on the throne of the universe. These are but attempts to express in pictorial thinking what missionary enterprise and the story of the Church had to tell. Exclusive interest to-day in the historic Jesus, as distinct from the risen and ascended Lord, still exemplifies this refusal to ask the question He desired His disciples to ask, *Whither goest thou?* We cannot understand Jesus, and the mind of Jesus, unless we take into account that He Himself did not regard His earthly life as a sufficient revelation. We must not only follow His actions and ponder His recorded sayings while on earth. We must follow Him in thought and faith. 7 *It is expedient for you that I go away. Where I am, there shall ye be also.* Absolute trust in God, prayer in Christ's name, the exercise of faith, and belief in the absolute supremacy of His teaching and way of life, are the direct result of putting the question, *Whither goest thou?* Jesus' answer is, *I go unto the Father* (xiv. 12, R.V.), that the power and love He manifested on earth may be at the disposal of

all men, in any circumstances that may befall them.

7-15 This section further develops the argument on the work of the Paraclete. Verses 8-11 describe the Paraclete as discharging the office of Judge. *When He is come, he will convict the world in respect of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.* Judges and magistrates before whom the disciples are accused will condemn them as wrongdoers and think they are acting righteously. The work of the Spirit, however, by what it accomplishes in men's lives and hearts, will show that the persecutors have been convicted *in respect of sin.* It is not said that they will feel themselves guilty, but the Paraclete as judge and strengthener of the persecuted pronounces them guilty of the charge that *they believe not on me.* They are also convicted *in respect of righteousness* (R.V.), *because I go to the Father* (cf. xiv. 28). The resurrection of Jesus was an act of God's omnipotent power (pp. 226f.). *Righteousness* is not merely a moral quality but a moral activity of God. The content of the term in the New Testament must be interpreted by its content in the Old Testament. *Righteousness* in a judge means not only that he administers impartial justice, but that He succours the oppressed. The *righteousness* of God in the Old Testament frequently calls forth praise (Ps. vii. 17; cxlv. 7, etc.). 'It is not the abstract justice of Jehovah's dealings that calls forth adoration, but His proved readiness to help His people.'[1] God is a *just God and a Saviour* (Is. xlv. 21). Paul uses the term *righteousness of God* for the Christian Gospel (Rom. i. 17). In verse 10 the word therefore means God's act in raising up the Crucified Jesus. The meaning is not that Jesus is morally righteous, but that in the sending of the Paraclete, Jesus is seen to be what He claimed to be, the Saviour of men. In the Resurrection Jesus and all that He stood for is vindicated by God. The persecutors are also convicted in respect of *judgment.* The death they inflicted on Jesus is judgment passed on *the prince of this world* (xii. 31), whose instruments they are.

13 *The Spirit of truth.*[2] The term is intended to guard

[1] See the important article in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible,* IV, 272ff., by J. Skinner.

[2] See pp. 141ff.

against false conceptions of the activity of the Spirit, not primarily to recommend the spirit of intellectual research. Undoubtedly the activity of God is at work in the growing progress of all new scientific discovery. We do not think of ourselves as wresting, like Prometheus, the secrets of His universe from the hand of a God unwilling to give them up. By the words *the Spirit of truth shall guide you into all the truth* (R.V.), the Evangelist means to guard against the influence of religion based on private revelations and inspirations peculiar to the temperament and outlook of certain individuals—'fancy-religions'. 'With these the Author is perfectly familiar, and he knows the pride and hatred and immorality which they occasion' (1 John ii. 18ff., iv. 1ff.; cf. 2 John 7ff., 3 John 9-11).[1] The material on which the Spirit operates is an historical event, the tradition of the words and works of Jesus Christ, the record of God's supreme achievement in history. *He shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak* (R.V.). *The Spirit of truth* is the direct activity of God in revealing Himself to the believer. 14, 15 The Evangelist reveals the principle that guided him in writing this gospel, so full of theological interpretation, yet so evidently based on authenticated tradition. The 'spirit of truth' has directed his mind as well as his heart. *Things to come* (*v.* 13) may also suggest life-situations for which no explicit moral teachings of Jesus exist (p. 215). *He shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you* (R.V.). He shall 'draw upon what is mine' (Moffatt). Compare Luke xxiv. 27, where the risen Christ is represented as interpreting 'the things concerning himself'. There Christ does so by the use of the Old Testament. The speaker who uttered these discourses conceives of himself as a prophet inspired by the Spirit of Truth. The teaching of the Spirit is necessarily limited by man's receptivity, but the words also imply that as God used the co-operation of men's minds in the making of Scripture so He makes use of them in its interpretation.

It is interesting to note that in these verses the Spirit is spoken of in personal terms. *He shall guide you.* In xiv. 17, the Spirit is

[1] E. C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, II, p. 574.

referred to by a neuter pronoun. (Spirit or *pneuma* is neuter in Greek.) This is obscured by the translation *him* in the A.V. and R.V. Literally the words would read *Ye know it.* This is of more than grammatical interest. It indicates that in the New Testament thought, the Spirit is not regarded as a personality, possessing a separate centre of consciousness. The Trinitarian doctrine is that the Spirit (like the *Logos*) is personal, because it is the Spirit of God Who is a personal Being, and therefore all His activity in the world and the hearts of men is personal. The Spirit of the Lord that *came mightily upon Samson* (Judges xiv. 6) is clearly no more than a sudden accession of strength, and had much more of Samson's personality in its manifestation than of the Divine personality. The idea of the Spirit as a vague accession of spiritual power is not absent in our thinking to-day. The New Testament always corrects this, as in this Gospel, by its insistence that the mark of the true Spirit, *the Spirit of truth,* is that in all its manifestations, the features of Christ are to be discerned. The Spirit is *another Paraclete.*

The Coming of the Paraclete is the Coming of Christ. *vv.* 16-24.

16 In the immediately preceding verses, Jesus has been speaking of the 'coming' of the Spirit. Now He speaks of His own 'coming', *in a little while.* In the experience of the Christian, the Spirit and the risen Christ are one. The *little while* here means the dark interval between His death and the disciples' assurance of His resurrection and continued presence with them. It corresponds to the *after three days* of the Synoptic narrative (Mark viii. 31). This was a conventional expression meaning an undefined but short interval (Hos. vi. 2; cf. John ii. 19). 17, 19 The way in which the changes are rung on the expression *a little while,* suggests that the Evangelist has before him the actual expression used by Jesus. 20-22 *Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.* A time of suffering before the dawn of the Messianic Kingdom is predicted in the Old Testament and in apocalyptic writings, in terms of travail and birth-pangs (Is. xxvi. 17; cf. 1 Thess. v. 3; Rom. viii. 18-23). 23 *In that day ye shall ask me nothing,* i.e. 'ye shall ask me no such questions as you are now putting'. Those who pray in Christ's *name,* i.e. with the new conception of God which He makes real, and the powers of the new age (the Kingdom of God) released in their hearts, will find them-

selves in possession of inexhaustible resources. *That day* is the new Christian era, inaugurated by the resurrection and the coming of the Spirit (cf. Matt. xviii. 19, 20).

Proverbial as against Plain Speech. vv. 25-33.

25 *Proverbs.* The word thus translated (*paroimia*) means a 'dark saying', whose meaning does not yield itself at once. It corresponds to the Hebrew *mashal,* which may mean 'proverb', but has a wider range of meaning. Ezek. xviii. 2 is a *mashal.* So also Luke iv. 23, although it is called a 'parable'. The utterance in *v.* 21 is a *mashal* or proverbial saying. It is more correct to describe xv. 1-2 as a *mashal* or proverb, than as an allegory. The Evangelist himself describes x. 1-5 as a '*proverb*' ('parable' A.V. and R.V. x. 6). i. 51 is a 'proverb' in the Johannine sense (pp. 8ff.). *The hour cometh when I shall no longer speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall tell you plainly of the Father.* As he records this saying, the Evangelist is really justifying his interpretation of the words of Jesus. There is a deeper meaning in the words of Jesus, hidden from all but believers, which, by reason of what the risen Lord has become to them and done for them, these are able to understand. The words are another rendering of Mark iv. 11. *Unto you is given the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all things are done* (or 'all things come to them') *in parables.* Interpretation such as he gives is not just overlaying what was once the simpler message of Jesus of Nazareth with theology. *Plainly* means something deeper than satisfaction of the intellect (cf. x. 24). The meaning is that Jesus is speaking of an experience of inward power and courage which will not be realized, until the disciples find that in all that meets them in their future mission, they are illuminated by the teaching of Jesus, and guided by His spirit. He is still with them. The noun corresponding to *plainly* (*parrhēsia*) is used to describe the boldness and calm conviction of Peter and John, which reminded their judges that they were disciples of Jesus, and that the 'Jesus-movement' was not dead (Acts iv. 13). The verb is used to characterize the preaching of Paul (Acts ix. 27) after his conversion (cf. Eph. vi. 20).

26, 27 *I say not . . . I will pray the Father for you.* The intercessory prayer of chapter xvii is delivered on earth. John does not single out the heavenly intercession of Jesus as one of His activities in heaven (xiv. 16 is no exception), as is done in Heb. vii. 25. Men, by reason of their faith and love, are brought into direct touch with the Father by the Father's own love, when they pray *in my name.* 30 *Now know we that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee.* The disciples are represented as satisfied, and as feeling that Jesus has spoken so plainly that they have no need to ask more questions. 31 *Do ye now believe?* They think that they now have all they need for faith. They are mistaken. The person and work of Jesus cannot be fully apprehended without the shattering crisis of the crucifixion, and experience of the Paraclete. There were those in the Evangelist's day, as in ours, who felt that if only they could have seen Jesus and heard Him speak, they would have been better able to make up their minds about Him, and to follow Him. 32 The Cross as the climax of His vocation they cannot understand. Jesus, in the hour of His passion, was spiritually and mentally alone so far as men are concerned. They had not the courage and insight to understand. *Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.* John does not record the words of dereliction on the Cross (Mark xv. 34); yet even in that utterance Jesus prays to the Father. His will is still one with God's. 33 *That in me ye may have peace.* There is a contrast between the way in which the disciples met *tribulation* before the resurrection, and the inward *peace* and *good cheer* with which they met subsequent adversity. Rom. viii. 31-39 is one great answer to the promise of *v.* 33.

(4) *The Prayer of the Great High Priest.* xvii.

It has already been suggested that the form of chapters xiii–xvi is determined by the general form of eucharistic worship, contemporary with the writing of the Gospel. The historical basis was that which was done and said in the Upper Room. The prayer of chapter xvii was based on a prayer, or prayers of Jesus Himself, again uttered and interpreted by a

Christian prophet. This theory is supported by the information supplied in the *Didache* regarding the Lord's Supper.

Two eucharistic prayers are recorded in the *Didache*, one before, and one after partaking.[1] The first prayer gives thanks for 'the holy vine of Thy son David, which Thou madest known unto us through Thy Son Jesus Christ' (cf. John xv. 1ff.), and uttered in connexion with the use of the cup. In connexion with the broken bread, thanks is given for 'the life and knowledge' made known 'through Thy Son Jesus' (cf. xvii. 2, 7, 22). Then follow the words, 'As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and being gathered together became one, so may Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom' (xvii. 20, 21). The prayer uttered after partaking contains these words: 'We give Thee thanks, Holy Father, for Thy holy name, which Thou hast made to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality, which Thou hast made known unto us through Thy Son Jesus' (xvii. 11, 12). 'Remember, Lord, Thy Church to deliver it from all evil and to perfect it in Thy love' (xvii. 15, 23); 'and gather it together from the four winds—even the Church which has been sanctified—into Thy Kingdom which Thou hast prepared for it' (xvii. 17, 20). The prayer is followed by the rubric, 'But permit the prophets to offer thanksgiving as much as they desire.' This implies that the form of words, from which extracts have been given, was fixed for the local office-bearer who presided. When, however, the duly authenticated 'prophet' appeared, and presided, his prayers are to follow the guidance of the Spirit. Both prayers are punctuated frequently by the ascription, 'Thine is the glory for ever and ever.' The *Didache* is dated about the very beginning of the second century. It will be apparent that many of the conceptions that occur in these *Didache* prayers appear in chapter xvii.

Attempts have been made to find analogies of thought and expression in the prayer, with the prayer in *Poimandres*,[2] one of

[1] *Didache* ix. x. Lightfoot's translation is followed in the subsequent quotations. (*Son (pais)* is better translated *servant*).

[2] A translation of this prayer will be found in C. H. Dodd, *The Bible*

the Hermetic writings. These analogies, however, are due to the fact that in this Hermetic writing the influence of Hebrew thought is everywhere apparent. There can be no question of literary dependence on the part of the Evangelist. This is ruled out both by the literary structure of the *Poimandres* prayer, which is rhetorical, as against the simple and intimate speaking with God which characterizes chapter xvii. The religious conceptions are also different. In the *Poimandres* prayer, God is described as 'ineffable, unspeakable, named in silence'. In the Johannine prayer Jesus says, 'I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me' (*v.* 6; cf. *v.* 11). Moreover, the conception of the Church appears most prominently in this chapter. 'The prayer is the consecration of the Church which already existed germinally in that knot of disciples.'[1] The foundation of the Church brings the work of Jesus to its culmination. He has finished the work given Him to do. Out of that finished work will spring a great future (*vv.* 20ff.). Jesus has been able to convey to these disciples the revelation of God committed to Him. 'I have given them thy word' (*v.* 14). They have reached a triumphant belief in Himself. Here we have a striking contrast with the prayer in *Poimandres*. *Poimandres* is conscious of *beginning* his mission of enlightenment. 'Empower me that I may enlighten with this grace those of the race that are in ignorance' (C. H. Dodd's translation). Jesus is able to entrust to His Church this task (*v.* 20).

Jesus speaks in this prayer as though the Cross and Resurrection were already past (cf. xix. 30 and notes). He speaks through the lips of the presiding 'prophet' at a meeting of the Church at Ephesus. It had not met to commemorate the pain, but the victory of Christ. Any deliberate calling attention to the actual suffering of Jesus, so as to provoke grief on the part of the worshippers, would be as unsuitable to the occasion as it was foreign to the mind of Jesus Himself when He spoke of His coming death. The mood is one of victory. The death and the manner of it are not forgotten, but the worshipper has entered into it. He, too, has died and risen again into a newness of life which is to *know thee, the only true God* (*v.* 3). The believer is himself *glorified* (*v.* 22). Already, while on earth, he shares the 'glory', the life in God, which the exalted Christ has made possible for him.

and the Greeks, p. 196; also a full examination of the thought of *Poimandres* in the same work, chapter viii.

[1] Scott *FG*, p. 108.

The sign of it is 'Love'; *that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them* (*v.* 26, R.V.).

The Prayer naturally divides itself into three parts:

1. *vv.* 1-8. The Perfect Sacrifice.
2. *vv.* 9-19. An Intercession for the Disciples.
3. *vv.* 20-26. An Intercession for the Church Universal.

The Perfect Sacrifice. vv. 1-8.

1 *The hour is come.* See note on ii. 4. *Glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee.* See note on 'Glory', 'Glorify', pp. 103ff. The Son, whom men have despised and rejected, is now to become 'Lord' (pp. 265f.). Compare Phil. ii. 11. 2 *Authority over all flesh* (R.V.). The *authority* is given in order that Christ may free men from sin. See notes on viii. 31ff. *That whatsoever thou hast given him . . . Eternal life* (R.V.). The A.V. obscures the significance of the expression *whatsoever.* The community or church called 'out of the world' is in view, the fellowship of faith. The church is not a voluntary organization. It is 'given' and created by God (cf. *v.* 6). The individual becomes a member of the 'body of Christ'. 3 *That they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* This knowledge of, or personal relationship with God is the distinguishing mark of the member of the Church. This knowledge is not part of our natural endowment as created men. Jesus is here given the royal Messianic name, *Christ. Jesus* is the name by which men knew Him on earth; *Christ* the name that denotes His 'sending' by God and its purpose (xx. 31). 5 *Before the world was.* Jesus, as the pre-existent 'Word', is regarded in the Prologue as God's agent in creation. From all eternity Jesus shared the Father's glory or Divine nature. He resumes that *glory,* having *finished the work which thou gavest me to do* (*v.* 4). 6 *I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world.* The *name* is the name 'Father'. No longer need men fear to pronounce the sacred name, as in the reading of the Jewish scriptures, or in prayer. It was forbidden in Jewish worship to pronounce the name *Jahweh.* 'He that pronounces the Name with its proper

letters ' has ' no share in the world to come.'[1] This name for God was always pronounced *Adonai* (=' Lord '). God is now self-revealed in Jesus, and invites men to say ' Father '.

8 *The words which thou gavest me, I have given unto them.* The word of God has become incarnate in the ' words ' of Jesus. Thus the disciples have been able through listening to the ' words ' of Jesus, to keep God's Word (*v.* 6). ' Keep ' means more than obey. It means to guard and to communicate to the world the revelation which God has entrusted to His Church.

An Intercession for the Disciples. vv. 9-19.

9 *I pray not for the world.* Yet Jesus died for the world (vi. 51). It is not meant that the world is ' past praying for ', but that to the Church is entrusted the spread of the message that will save the world. Compare *v.* 20. The world is to *know* through the witness of the disciples (xiii. 35; xiv. 31). His intercession for the disciples will strengthen that witness. They have needs and responsibilities arising out of their mission, which the world does not have, and Jesus recognizes these.

10 *I am glorified in them.* The sacrifices demanded of them and their sacrificial spirit will tell the world that Jesus is alive and reigning. The Church will not perish (cf. Matt. xvi. 18). It has been created by God, and is God's own. *They are thine, and all mine are thine, and thine are mine.* Yet the Church and its mission are inseparable. Where the Church has failed, it is because it has failed to be the Church (cf. *v.* 18 and 1 Pet. ii. 9). 11 *Holy Father, keep them in thy name.* The opening clause of the Lord's Prayer is *Hallowed be thy name.* The phrase, *Holy Father,* is significant. If God is *holy,* men cannot presume on His love. *Holy* originally meant what belongs to God, and must not be violated, or defiled.[2] As *Father,* God ' draws ' men to Himself. In the New Testament Church members are called ' the saints ' (' the holy people ',

[1] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* x. 1 (Danby). On the motives that led to this secrecy, see Moore *JFC* I. 425f. The real motive was akin to that which prescribes that the sovereign is not addressed by his personal name.

[2] See the article ' Holiness in the Old Testament ', *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible,* Vol. II.

e.g. Phil. i. 1 etc.). The emphasis is not on moral perfection, but on the fact that they are God's people. *Keep them in thy name.* As bearing God's *holy* name (they call Him *Father*), they are His possession, and therefore nothing can hurt them. God protects them, in life or death. *That they may be one even as we are* (R.V.). See notes on *vv.* 22, 23.
12 The danger to be avoided is the breaking of the ranks of the Church by such apostasies as that of Judas, *the son of perdition.* See note on xii. 36.
13 *That they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.* 'Joy' and 'pleasure' are not to be confused. Keats ought to have said that it is 'pleasure', not 'joy',

> whose hand is ever at his lips, bidding adieu.[1]

The *joy* of Jesus is the joy that arises from the sense of a finished work. It is creative joy, like the joy of the artist. It produces a sense of unexhausted power for fresh creation. This joy in the heart of Jesus is both the joy of victory (xv. 11), and the sense of having brought His Church into being. For that Church He now prays (cf. xvii. 20, 21). He communicates that 'joy' to His Church. 'Wherever there is joy, there is creation; the richer the creation, the deeper the joy. The mother beholding her child is joyous. . . . True joy is the feeling of having started an enterprise which goes, of having brought something to life. . . . He who is sure, absolutely sure, of having produced a work which will endure and live, cares no more for praise and feels above glory, because he is a creator, because he knows it, because the joy he feels is the joy of a god.'[2] 14-16 The sources of that joy are here described. (*a*) The Church is the bearer of the life-giving 'word', with which it has been entrusted. (*b*) The Church is in the world but not of it. It does not exist to give what the world wants, but to create the desire for what it has to give. (*c*) The Church needs to be preserved *from the evil one* (R.V.), from compromise with worldly standards, and the use of worldly means. 17-19 God *sanctifies* the disciples, as He

[1] *On Melancholy.*
[2] H. Bergson, *Mind Energy*, p. 23; cf. T. E. Brown, *Opifex.*

sanctified or set apart Jesus for His mission. 'Sanctify' is the verb in Greek which corresponds to 'holy'. *For their sakes I sanctify myself.* The animal offered in sacrifice to God was 'sanctified' in the sense that it was given to God, acknowledged as His possession (Deut. xv. 19). So with the first-born (Exod. xiii. 2). Similarly, the priest was 'sanctified' (Exod. xxviii. 41), as one whose life was devoted to the service of God, on behalf of the people. Jesus is both priest and victim. His is therefore a voluntary sacrifice. In thus 'sanctifying Himself', Jesus consecrates Himself in death to God. Those who *abide* in Him are united with Him, and enter into God's presence with Him, sharing even now His *eternal life.* The disciples are *one* with Him here and now, by the gift of the Spirit. They are sanctified *in the truth.* They really belong to God and are delivered from the illusion and falsehood of an experience like that of those who call themselves 'children of God', and yet by the rejection of Jesus, are children of Satan (viii. 44).

Intercession for the Church Universal. vv. 20-26.

21-23 *That they may be one, as we are one.* The unity here spoken of belongs to a much deeper region than the matter of external union. Note: (*a*) That this unity is comparable to the unity that exists between the Father and the Son, and is of the same character—a unity of purpose. Compare x. 30 and notes. It is therefore a personal relationship of love and will between fellow-Christians, though not all included in one society. (*b*) It is a unity that is to be *perfected into one.* Its value is in proportion as the presence and influence of the one Spirit takes possession of men's hearts. *I in them, and thou in me.* The basis of this unity is religious. Even what is called 'oecumenical' union, the world-wide Church remains imperfect without a unity in our doctrine of God and of salvation, and a unity of purpose in our mission. The size and extent of the Church alone will not impress the world. This inward unity expressing itself in a common mission and message will alone impress the world; *that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me.*

These words of Jesus are constantly quoted, as though they meant a visible, external, incorporating unity. No such actual situation could possibly be contemplated as ours today, where there exist side by side different denominations, separated from one another by questions of orders, sacraments, church government, and formal creeds. The unity here spoken of implicitly condemns all sectarianism. The Evangelist condemns those Docetists who deny that *Jesus Christ is come in the flesh* as sectarians (1 John ii. 19). Yet, our outward separation, in so far as it is disabling, can be removed only by the spirit of unity as described in these verses. We may never reach agreement on the forms of church government or of worship. That is neither necessary nor desirable. We must reach agreement regarding the Christian message, the sacraments, and the apostolic mission of the Church to the world.

24-26. The theme of verses 24-26 is *glory*, and the thought centres around the future of the disciples during their time of tribulation. The best commentary on the passage is to be found in Rom. viii. 18-25, and 2 Cor. iii. 7-18. The *glory* which is here and now *given* to the disciples (*v.* 22) is the eternal love of God. *Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world* (*v.* 24). *That the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them* (*v.* 26). This love is to be *in them*, but not only among them. It will spread through their preaching and example to the whole world.

2. The Arrest and Trial. xviii. 1–xix. 16.

The Arrest. xviii. 1-11.

1 *Across the brook Kidron* (R.V.). Really a valley or gorge, along which a stream flowed after heavy rain. It lay between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives.[1] The *garden* is Gethsemane, and may have been a private garden belonging to some friend. John omits the story of the Agony in Gethsemane (p. 194), but makes use later on of the words of the prayer of Jesus there uttered (*v.* 11; cf. Matt. xxvi. 39, 42).

2 *Judas knew the place.* The Evangelist thus emphasizes his treachery. Jesus, who foresaw the treacherous purpose of

[1] G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem* I. 80f.

Judas, made no attempt to escape arrest, but went as usual to the place where of an evening He was accustomed to go with His disciples.

3 *The band of soldiers* (R.V.); literally 'the cohort'. A cohort consisted of from 500 to 1,000 men. It is impossible that such a number was used. The meaning is the same as when we say 'the police were called in' (cf. Matt. xxvii. 27). The Roman soldiers were present, in case there was any resistance to the Temple police, who are mentioned as acting along with them. That Jesus came forward and voluntarily surrendered Himself, is emphasized. 4 *He went forth, and saith unto them, Whom seek ye?* Celsus, the opponent of Christianity, in the end of the second century, alleged that 'Jesus attempted to escape by disgracefully concealing himself'.[1] The Evangelist may have had to meet similar arguments against the Divine nature of Jesus. 'Even if He were bound', says Origen in reply, 'He was bound agreeably to His own will'. The 'kiss' of Judas is omitted. The reason may be that stress is again laid on 'the voluntariness of Jesus' acceptance of arrest' (Bernard). It is noticeable that Luke's narrative implies that Jesus speaks before Judas had time to give Him the kiss (xxii. 47, 48). He does not wait to be singled out, but steps forward out of the darkness into the light of the torches and lanterns. 5-7 The men *went backward and fell to the ground.* This may be interpreted as a recoil in fear before the moral ascendancy of Jesus, which even Judas shared. Some of them may never have seen Jesus before (cf. vii. 44). 'In the confusion, they, or some of the crowd stumbled and fell' (Bernard). On the other hand, it is more likely that Jesus is represented as making a Divine claim. *I am he* (lit. 'I am') is the manner of speech appropriate to God (cf. Deut. xxxii. 39; Is. xliii. 10). In consequence, He inspires His captors with Divine dread. 8 *Let these go their way.* The disciples do not desert Jesus as in Mark xiv. 50, but owe their escape to His intercession. 9 The word referred to in verse 9 is xvii. 12. The Scripture there cited is Ps. xli. Jesus' own word, like Scripture, carries its own power of fulfilment. By a word, He secured the free-

[1] Origen, *Against Celsus* II. x.

dom of His disciples from arrest. The picture is of One who is in complete command of the situation.

10 *Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it.* The presence of weapons among the disciples is remarkable. Had they reason to believe that Jesus might be arrested at any moment, by the Temple police, and had secretly obtained weapons? Did the unexpected presence of Roman soldiers cow them all, except Peter?

11 *The cup.* See Matt. xx. 22, 23; xxvi. 39, 42 (cf. Is. li. 22). Note the form in which the Gethsemane prayer recorded in Matt. xxvi. 42 is rendered. There is here no shrinking on the part of Jesus, but confident acceptance.

The Examination before the High Priest. xviii. 12-14, 19-24.

The narrative does not make it quite clear whether the high priest who condemned Jesus is Annas or Caiaphas (*v.* 19). It is broken by the interposition of the circumstances of Peter's first denial (*vv.* 15-18), and the story is resumed in *vv.* 25-27. The translation of *v.* 24 in the Revised Version is the correct one, and implies that the examination before Caiaphas is not recorded. Yet why should Annas be called *the high priest* (*v.* 19), in view of the statement in *v.* 13? The explanation is that although Annas had been deposed by Valerius Gratus, the Roman Procurator in A.D. 15, the title 'high priest' was still given to those who had held the office.[1]

The Roman Procurators evidently had power to make or unmake high priests. Annas must have been a very important person in ecclesiastical councils, and Annas evidently conducted a preliminary informal investigation into the charges against Jesus, during the night. Mark (followed by Matthew) indicates that there were two stages in the trial of Jesus; one a preliminary examination (before Caiaphas according to Matthew; Mark mentions no name); the second a trial before the whole Sanhedrin, formally convened (Matt. xxvi. 57; xxvii. 1; Mark xiv. 53; xv. 1). It was illegal to hold a formal meeting during the night; yet Matthew and Mark seem to have transferred some of the incidents at the morning meeting to the previous night. Luke avoids the mistake, and

[1] Cf. Schürer, *History of the Jewish People* (E.Tr.), II, i, p. 203.

though he does not name Annas, he indicates an informal examination, immediately after the arrest, in *the house of the high priest* (xxii. 54). We may therefore conclude that verses 19-23 describe a preliminary examination before Annas, and that the trial before Caiaphas is merely mentioned in verse 24.[1]

The Johannine order of events in verses 15-27 evidently caused perplexity in the textual tradition from early times. The Sinaitic Syrian Palimpsest adopts the following order, *vv.* 12, 13, 24, 14, 15, 19-23, 16, 18, 25-27. This makes Peter's denial take place in the courtyard of the palace of Caiaphas. One Greek manuscript transfers *v.* 24 to a position in *v.* 13, after the words *Annas first*. This, however, is only to remove one difficulty and to secure a measure of harmony with the Synoptic tradition, by creating another. How are we to explain the origin of the existing order? Harmonizing texts is no longer a valid procedure in Gospel interpretation once we admit varying lines of tradition in the Gospel narratives. There is undoubtedly some confusion in the Synoptic traditions, and it is very difficult to understand why the Fourth Evangelist should have introduced the preliminary examination before Annas, unless he knew that it had taken place.[2] This Evangelist shows little interest in the formal Jewish trial of Jesus.[3]

13 *That year* (R.V.). See notes on xi. 51. 19 *Asked Jesus of his disciples and of his teaching.* This line of examination indicates that Annas, like Caiaphas, was afraid that the new movement would prove a danger to the established order, particularly as represented by the Temple and priesthood (cf. xi. 48 and notes). He treats Jesus as though He were the founder of a new political sect, as well as a heretic. His mind is already preparing the ground for the political charge which would be submitted to Pilate.

20, 21 In His answer to Annas (*vv.* 20, 21) Jesus repudiates the insinuation that He and His disciples behaved like conspirators, who held secret conclaves in order to listen to subversive political teaching. It was precisely the lack of any real evidence on this point that hampered the plea before

[1] Josephus, *Antt.* xx. ix. 1, 2. On the trial of Jesus, see Taylor Innes, *The Trial of Jesus Christ*; and the article in Hastings *DCG* by J. Moffatt.

[2] Cf. Hoskyns *FG* II, p. 607.

[3] A formal trial is just indicated in Mark xv. 1. Is Annas the unnamed High Priest in xiv. 53ff.?

Pilate. The ecclesiastical authorities only gained their point ultimately, by threats against Pilate's own standing with Rome (xix. 12). All the time, they had made up their minds to have Jesus condemned on a political charge. This Evangelist makes no mention of the religious accusations made against Jesus in the trial before Caiaphas, which provoked the great reply recorded in Mark xiv. 62, and Caiaphas's violent repudiation of the 'blasphemy'. The rending of his garments by Caiaphas on that occasion, and his shocked repudiation of blasphemy, were probably camouflage in order to secure the sympathy of the whole Sanhedrin for an adverse verdict. So much may be inferred from the Synoptic account. Many would be more deeply moved by an offence against orthodoxy, than by the prospect of any danger that threatened the Roman government from the action of Jesus. Caiaphas had to unite Pharisees who were violently opposed to the Roman government, and Sadducees who were all for political appeasement.

22, 23 *Struck Jesus with the palm of his hand;* no doubt on the cheek. The reply of Jesus is no contradiction of the principle laid down in Matt. v. 39, which deals entirely with personal insult. The blow on the cheek there spoken of is given on the 'right cheek', and therefore with the back of the right hand. It need not be a severe one. It is meant not to do bodily injury but to insult, and is practised among Orientals to-day. Turning 'the other cheek' is not exhausted in submissive behaviour, or in refusing to return insult for insult. 'It is a language, and the whole virtue of language is that it is understood.'[1] Jesus makes His calm acceptance of insult understood, and seeks to convey the new idea of justice which love includes, not only to this hot-tempered minion who sought to uphold what is due to a high priest from an accused person, but indirectly to Annas himself. If, says Jesus, the official thought the answer an insult, he should have addressed his protest to the judge—'borne witness' in a legal way. If, on the other hand, Jesus' reply to the high priest's inquiry (*v.* 19) is 'to the point' (we might thus render *well* (*kalōs*)), why should he be thus insulted? The reply is both

[1] W. E. Hocking, *Human Nature and its Re-making* (1929), p. 376.

reasonable and intelligible, recalling this minor official to a sense of duty and fairness.

The Denial of Peter. xviii. 15-18, 25-27.

The story is given in two parts. The division has a certain dramatic appropriateness, in view of the fact that, while Peter is denying Jesus, Annas is asking Him at the same moment about *his disciples,* and Jesus is also appealing to their testimony (*vv.* 19, 20). *Another disciple* (*vv.* 15, 16). He is not the 'beloved disciple'. See pp. 82ff. In *vv.* 17, 18 there appears a life-like touch. The first denial takes place at the very door, when Peter had not yet recovered from his surprise at being admitted. Also the narrative gains in impressiveness because the speakers are different each time, in contrast with the Synoptic account. Peter, in a spirit of bravado, with one denial just off his lips, is *warming himself* at the brazier, and stands exposed to further questioning. The crowning point is reached when the kinsman of Malchus confronts him.

The Trial before Pilate. xviii. 28–xix. 16.

The trial is presented dramatically in a series of scenes, which are laid alternately outside and inside the Praetorium.

Scene I. xviii. 28-32. Pilate meets the Prisoner and His accusers outside the Praetorium.
Scene II. *vv.* 33-38a. The first interview with Jesus: 'Art thou the King of the Jews?'
Scene III. *vv.* 38b-40. Barabbas.
Scene IV. xix. 1-3. The scourging and mockery.
Scene V. *vv.* 4-7. 'Behold the man!'
Scene VI. *vv.* 8-11. 'Whence art thou?'
Scene VII. *vv.* 12-16. 'We have no King but Caesar.'

Discrepancies in the Gospel narratives of the arrest and trial of Jesus need not surprise us. The narratives must have been founded on the accounts of eyewitnesses, but we must bear in mind that no event took the disciples more by surprise than the arrest of Jesus, and they were not present throughout at the trial. Moreover, they were not in such a state of mind

as to enable them to remember accurately what they saw or heard. To many of the scenes they had no immediate access. The haste of the proceedings, the fear that overtook them, the overwhelming effect of 'the sudden Roman faces and the noise' had their effect. The accounts must afterwards have been pieced together, not only from personal recollection, but from information supplied by Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and other sympathizers.[1]

If the Evangelist was originally a member of the Sadducean party, and had access to ecclesiastical circles,[2] his extraordinarily vivid and accurate account, not only of the happenings, but of the motives of the ecclesiastical authorities and the hesitation in the mind of Pilate, can be explained. The Fourth Evangelist brings out clearly that the ecclesiastical authorities, when they referred the case to Pilate, had altered the charge to one of high treason, accusing Jesus of having pretensions to political Messiahship as 'King of the Jews' (Luke xxiii. 2, 3; Mark xv. 2; Matt. xxvii. 11; John xviii. 33). He represents the charge of blasphemy as blurted out in xix. 7, on hearing which Pilate was *the more afraid* (xix. 8). See notes on *vv.* 20, 21. Pilate has already seen through the manœuvre of the priests, and knows that this man is no mere leader of revolt. He is superstitiously impressed by the personality and bearing of Jesus. *Whence art thou?* The silence of Jesus in response to this question left a still deeper impression, and Pilate made his final effort to release Him. The Evangelist's purpose is to show that the responsibility for what happened must be placed on 'the Jews'. The whole story of the trial as told in this gospel is a life-like picture. The only passage where there could be any suggestion that the narrative has been influenced by any peculiar Johannine interpretation is xviii. 36-38. The account everywhere shows traces of an independent and first-hand source of information.

Scene I. The Approach to the Praetorium. xviii. 28-32.

28 *They led Jesus . . . into the Praetorium* (R.V.m.) . . .

[1] A very vivid account of the actual situation may be found in Hastings *DCG* II. p. 750.

[2] pp. 84ff.

and they themselves entered not into the Praetorium (R.V.). The Praetorium was the Governor's residence. *That they might not be defiled* (cf. xi. 55). Here there is irony. They are already impure in God's sight as the agents in the crucifixion of Jesus. *It was early.* The arrest and trial were both hurried on in order that all might be over before 6 p.m. (Thursday), when the Passover began. 29, 30 *Pilate therefore went out.* The public proceedings took place in the open air, probably in a paved portico of the Praetorium. Pilate was at first conciliatory, and had regard to their scruples. *What accusation bring ye?* The reply is vague, elusive, and somewhat insolent. The religious authorities must not seem openly to ask Pilate to review any decision to which the Sanhedrin had come. 31 When the Jews speak of Jesus as an *evil-doer,* Pilate assumes that He has committed an offence against Jewish law, and bids them deal with the case themselves. He knew that the charge must have been of the most serious kind, punishable by death. Otherwise the case would not have been brought before him at all. Are we then to understand that in the words, *Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law,* Pilate somewhat impatiently, as Roman Procurator, gives the permission which was required? The Jewish reply, *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death* is usually taken to imply that, at that time, the Sanhedrin had not the power to inflict the death penalty, which had been taken from it by Roman decree. This assumption creates serious difficulty in connexion with the death of Stephen (Acts vii. 54-60), which was undoubtedly a judicial execution, not a mere lynching at the hands of a mob. The view that it is an error to suppose that the ecclesiastical authorities had no power of life and death for ecclesiastical offences has weighty support.[1] It is very uncertain at what date before A.D. 70, if at all, the legal power of life and death was taken from the Jewish Sanhedrin. It is likely that it

[1] e.g. H. Lietzmann, *The Beginnings of the Christian Church,* E.Tr., p. 74; cf. SB I, p. 1026. Bernard reads too much into the statement made in Josephus, *Wars* II. viii. 1, when he deduces that when Judea became a Roman province, the power of inflicting the death penalty was taken away from the Sanhedrin. Josephus merely says that the first procurator, Coponius, had ' the power of life and death put into his hands by Caesar '.

continued to possess that power for the punishment of religious offences, the permission of the Roman governors being necessary for the carrying out of the sentence. The reply in *v.* 31 may be taken to mean that the Sanhedrin had no power to inflict the death penalty without Pilate's permission, and indeed had no jurisdiction at all in cases of sedition. For reasons presently to be mentioned, the authorities reported Jesus not for blasphemy, but for sedition, basing the charge on a distortion of His words (Luke xix. 12; xx. 25). They sought to compel Pilate to condemn Jesus on the sedition charge, and to have Him crucified.

The Johannine account of the trial before Pilate makes one important point clear. Caiaphas and the others were determined that Jesus should die as bandits and revolutionaries die—on the cross. The infliction of death by stoning might have been too dangerous (' lest there be a tumult of the people ', Mark xiv. 2). They were too shrewd to make the condemnation of Jesus a purely religious issue. They took advantage of a nervousness in the Sanhedrin itself due to the increasing popular support of Jesus (xi. 48). Their plans were laid for His death on a political issue some time before, and *agents provocateurs* were employed (Mark xii. 13-17). 32 Note the significance of *v.* 32, which, as Hoskyns points out, ' is somewhat irrelevant, unless the author intends to suggest that Jewish incompetence (*v.* 31) has a divine significance '.[1] It is much more likely that the Evangelist sees divine significance in the shrewd and far-seeing determination of Caiaphas and his confederates to have Jesus crucified, not stoned. Twice the Evangelist describes Jesus as escaping death by stoning (viii. 59; x. 31). The disciples evidently feared lest Jesus might suffer a judicial death by stoning (xi. 8).

[1] The reader is referred to the interesting exposition of *vv.* 29-32 in Hoskyns *FG* II, pp. 616ff. Hoskyns suggests that the narrative is governed by the conception that crucifixion and not stoning was the Divinely appointed method of Jesus' death (cf. xii. 33). The Jews are represented as, when they insist on crucifixion, ' moved by a divine necessity of which they are unconscious '.

Scene II. 'Art thou the King of the Jews?' *vv.* 33-38a.

33 *Art thou the King of the Jews?* Pilate has seen through the motives of the accusers, and proceeds by private interrogation to examine Jesus. There is incredulity in his question. Jesus neither looks nor behaves like a revolutionary. 34 The tenor of Jesus' reply, *Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?* is to cast responsibility on the Jews. Is Pilate willing to accept their evidence, and become a tool in their hands? There may be also the suggestion that Pilate spontaneously recognizes a kingliness in the bearing of Jesus. 35 Pilate indignantly parries the home-thrust. *Am I a Jew?* His procuratorial dignity and impartiality are impugned. 36 Jesus then claims to be King of a spiritual Kingdom of *truth.* He implicitly disavows the action of Peter in the garden (xviii. 10). *If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight,* as they would be bound to do in loyalty to their leader. 37 Pilate's question, *Art thou a king then?* is meant to give the impression that he dimly recognizes a kingliness in Jesus. *Thou sayest that I am a king.* Jesus reminds Pilate that he first used the word 'king', prompted, in his last question, by a dim sense of a nobler sovereignty conveyed by the whole bearing of Jesus. In the words that follow, *To this end was I born . . . that I should bear witness to the truth,* Jesus develops further the *truth* of His person and mission, which existed in Pilate's mind only as a vague intimation. *Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice* (cf. 1 John ii. 21; John x. 16, 27). Yet a man must be *born again* in order to *see the kingdom of God* (iii. 3). Pilate has heard the voice, but does not obey. 38 *What is truth?* indicates that Pilate, as an official who has to settle a case on grounds of fact, is impatient at being thus taken into a spiritual region where no certainty is possible.

Pilate appears in this Gospel as a type of the pagan magistrate before whom Christ's followers were afterwards summoned to stand. This passage in particular is meant to give guidance and encouragement to the Church. 'Roman officials are normally incapable of perceiving the Truth, and Christians must be content to make it plain that they are not seditious. This is no hopeless task, since it was the blasphem-

ous activity of the Jews, not the conviction of Pilate, which led to the decision that Jesus should be crucified.'[1]

Scene III. Barabbas. *vv.* 38b-40.

38b-39 Pilate again declares Jesus' innocence. Barabbas was a political prisoner, a leader of revolt (Luke xxiii. 19). *Robber* should be translated 'bandit'. 40 *Not this man, but Barabbas.* 'The enthusiasm with which the Jews intervened on behalf of one who had taken up arms against Rome would strengthen Pilate's judgment that "truth" did not dwell with the priests. If "truth" existed at all, it was to be found in Jesus' (Schlatter). The Evangelist sees this point: 'Now Barabbas was a bandit' (cf. Matt. xxvii. 15-22; Mark xv. 6-15; Luke xxiii. 18-24). The sheer insincerity of the charge of sedition against Jesus is bitingly exposed. It was evident that the motive was personal enmity.

Scene IV. The Scourging and the Mockery. xix. 1-3.

1 *Pilate, therefore, took Jesus and scourged him;* better 'had him scourged'. The scourging is part of the examination, in order to extract a confession. In Mark xv. 15, followed by Matthew, the scourging follows the sentence of crucifixion, which would have been wanton cruelty. Luke (xxiii. 16) mentions it as an alternative to crucifixion. In this Gospel, Pilate's soldiers, not Herod's (Luke xxiii. 11) mock Jesus. 2-3 *They struck him with their hands.* The purpose was insult. The word is the same as in xviii. 22 (see note). We are witnessing a soldiers' brutal game. *And they came unto him* (R.V.); i.e. *approached him with gestures of mock reverence.* The mockery is within the praetorium, while the soldiers were awaiting orders from Pilate to bring Jesus out again.

Scene V. 'Behold the man.' *vv.* 4-7.

5 Pilate, like Caiaphas, is unwittingly a prophet. *Behold the man.* Who would suspect that this pitiable figure was to outlast Pilate and the great empire for which he stood? Would outlive the Jewish hierarchy and Temple? The emblems of mockery which He wears with silent submission show to the

[1] Hoskyns *FG* II. 620.

Christian believer that Jesus is no mere Divine being masquerading as a man. Pilate himself may have meant to imply that such patience and submission are not the marks of a fomenter of sedition. 6 Lest there should be a momentary revulsion of feeling among the crowd due to pity, and they be satisfied with this mockery, the priests immediately raise the cry, 'Crucify, crucify,' 'To the Cross.' *Take him yourselves and crucify him.* Pilate is ironical. He gives them mock permission to crucify Jesus, knowing that they dare not stone Him (p. 313). 7 In perturbation, the priests blurt out at last their original indictment against Jesus, as though they were compelled, for the purpose of rallying the Jewish crowd somewhat moved by the spectacle of the 'man', to emphasize the Divine claim Jesus had made. The charge of blasphemy implied that Jesus had claimed to be more than any Messiah had ever claimed. Compare notes on xviii. 31, 32.

Scene VI. 'Whence art thou?' *vv.* 8-11.

8 Pilate, hearing the religious charge for the first time, already impressed by the mystery of Jesus' personality, becomes superstitiously afraid. Is Jesus more than man? He retires with Jesus into the Praetorium. 9, 10 *Whence art thou?* The answer is an imperial silence. Jesus does more than assert His Divine origin and power. He assumes it. In striking contrast, Pilate *asserts* his power. 11 Jesus reminds him that his power is given him of God (Rom. xiii. 1-2). He is about to misuse it, but his guilt is less than the guilt of the religious authorities who had given the Son of God into his hands. God had given Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin no judicial authority over Jesus. They are unauthorized shepherds, who enter the fold *by some other way* (x. 1).

Scene VII. 'We have no king but Caesar.' *vv.* 12-16.

12 *Thou art not Caesar's friend.* 'Friend of the Emperor' was an official title, like 'Privy Councillor', granted to distinguished people.[1] Compare note on xv. 14, 15. Probably Pilate held that title and was proud of it. There is a covert

[1] Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, third edition, p. 383; cf. Josephus, *Antiquities* xiv. viii. 1.

threat in the words. Pilate may, if he acquits Jesus, appear to countenance sedition, and will certainly antagonize still further the Jewish religious authorities. He had come into collision with them before, as Josephus tells us.[1] We have also indication of serious trouble in Luke xiii. 1, which refers to some religious riot, provoked by desecration of the temple on the part of Pilate. Blood was shed on that occasion. The tension already existing produces what appears to be an underlying threat again to report Pilate to Caesar.[2] Here the Evangelist displays a remarkable knowledge of the popular feeling towards Pilate. 13 The Greek would support the translation, 'Pilate . . . led Jesus forth and *set him* on the judgment seat.'[3] This would be the final mockery—yet again an unconscious prophecy—aimed not so much at Jesus, as at His accusers. On the other hand, such behaviour is hardly to be expected of the Roman proconsul, and is hardly in accordance with the impression Jesus has already made on Pilate. It is much more likely that the Evangelist simply says that Pilate 'sat down' in order to give his verdict. 14 *Pavement* means in Greek a mosaic pavement. The Hebrew name is also given. Thereby the Evangelist indicates that Pilate's verdict has significance for all the world (cf. *vv.* 17, 20). Similarly, Pilate's mocking words, aimed not so much at Jesus as at His accusers, carry a meaning undreamt of by him: *Behold your King!* The mention of the day of *preparation of the passover*, and of *the sixth hour* (midday), is meant to suggest that on that day and at that time, preparations were being made for the sacrifice of the paschal lambs. 15 *We have no king but Caesar.* Israel has committed the final apostasy in thus rejecting the ancient theocratic conception (Ps. lxxiv. 12; lxxxiv. 3; xcv. 3) that God alone is King of Israel. It has thus forfeited its claim to be God's chosen people. Note that Pilate is represented as asking the priests finally whether it is their *deliberate* intention that he should crucify their King. The apostasy described in i. 11 is now complete: *He*

[1] *Antiquities* xviii. iii. 2.

[2] See Hastings *DCG*, *The Trial of Jesus*.

[3] The apocryphal *Gospel of Peter* (III) also records a similar interpretation, but attributes the action to 'the Jews', *The Apocryphal New Testament*, M. R. James. Cf. Justin Martyr, *Apology* I. 35. Arguments against this interpretation will be found in Bernard *ICC* II, p. 622.

came into his own, and his own received him not. Israel's priests, speaking for the chosen nation, become traitors to its noblest traditions.

3. The Crucifixion. xix. 17-37.

17 *Bearing the cross for himself* (R.V.). The criminal carried his own cross to the place of crucifixion. The episode of Simon of Cyrene is omitted (Matt. xxvii. 32; Mark xv. 21; Luke xxiii. 26), but a place for it is still possible. Jesus began the journey by carrying His own cross. Simon was met on the way, coming in the opposite direction. The Gnostic, Basilides (*c.* A.D. 125) suggested that Simon was crucified instead of Jesus,[1] in order to deny, in the interest of Docetism, that Jesus actually suffered. It is possible that the Evangelist omits the incident of Simon, as stories of this kind were already gathering about his name. On the other hand, some think that it is unnecessary to suppose that the Gnostic interpretation was in the Evangelist's mind. By the statement, *bearing the cross for himself*, may he not merely be stressing the fact that Jesus was treated like an ordinary criminal? Or did he intend to recall the picture of Isaac on his way to Moriah (Gen. xxii. 6), which had come to be regarded as a type of the death of Christ? (cf. *Epistle of Barnabas*, 7).

Golgotha. It is impossible to locate the site. It was evidently near the city (*v.* 20), on a road leading out through a gate in the neighbourhood of the Praetorium.[2] The name *place of a skull* may have arisen from its being a mound with a skull-like contour (Luke xxiii. 33). Note again that both the Greek and the Hebrew name is given (see note on *v.* 13).

18 *Jesus in the midst.* Jesus is not only 'numbered with the transgressors', but shares their fate. 19, 20 The title is in three languages, a symbol of the world-wide destination of the Christian message. Jesus *will draw all men* unto Himself (xii. 31, 32; xi. 50). It proclaims to all the world that Jesus is *King of the Jews. What I have written, I have written.* Pilate's refusal to alter the words is again an unconscious testimony that God makes him His instrument. In spite of their

[1] Irenaeus I. 24, 4.
[2] G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem* II, p. 576.

apostasy, *salvation is of the Jews* (iv. 22).

23, 24 *Now the coat was without seam . . . throughout.* The clothes were the perquisites of the soldiers. The *coat* is the undergarment. It is extremely doubtful if the Evangelist has a symbolic purpose in thus emphasizing that the coat was *without seam*. Cyprian extracts from the seamless robe the idea of the unity of the Church.[1] Josephus calls attention to the fact that the full-dress garment of the high priest was seamless.[2] Does the Evangelist here think of Jesus as the Great High Priest? It is much more probable that he thinks of the undergarment as seamless merely in order to see in what happened an exact fulfilment of prophecy. 'They part my garments among them and cast lots on my vesture' (Ps. xxii. 18). He ignores the Hebrew poetic parallelism, and infers that the lots had to be cast because the undergarment was seamless. In the Psalm, the parting of the garments and the casting of lots for the vesture represent the same act. 'Garments' and 'vesture' are simply variants in the parallelistic style of Hebrew prophecy. This insistence on literal fulfilment of prophecy is meant to prove that even such details of the crucifixion were entirely within the horizon of God's eternal purpose (see pp. 26off.).

25, 26 *Woman, behold thy son. . . . Behold thy mother.* Symbolic interpretations of the scene are suggested. The mother of Jesus is said to represent the ancient faith—the 'mother' that had given birth to Christianity—and Jesus commends her as He dies to the care of His beloved disciple. 'What was valuable and permanent in Judaism has now passed over to Christianity: the "mother of Jesus" now dwells in the house of His disciple.'[3] It should also be said that to symbolize an incident is not to imply that it never actually happened. Bernard's note (*ICC*) is illuminating. It is true to human experience that as death draws nearer, the interest of the dying narrows down to thought regarding those who are nearest and dearest. 'The first movement of the heart of Jesus is towards those who have brought Him to the Cross. "Father, forgive

[1] Cf. Hoskyns *FG* II, p. 630.
[2] *Antiquities* III. vii. 4; cf. Enoch xxviii. 31-35.
[3] Scott *FG* 74f. Dr. Scott interprets the Beloved Disciple as symbolizing the ideal Christian.

them." His mission of Redemption is still in His thought. Then, as strength ebbs away, the cry of the penitent thief by His side reaches Him, and the response to the individual pleading does not fail. 'This day shalt thou be with me.' But the circle is narrowing fast. His dying eyes are fixed upon those who have been dearest. . . . These are the stages of the approach of death for the Perfect Man.' The form of address, *Woman*, is the same as in ii. 4. The words are a very tender application of the thought of xvii. 11. See notes on ii. 4.

28 *I thirst.* Again the human weakness of Jesus is emphasized as in iv. 7. The Scripture which the Evangelist has in mind is Ps. lxix. 21 (cf. Mark xv. 36). The Scripture citation means that the thirst is within the purpose of God. Bernard suggests that the evangelist sees the draught as enabling the parched throat to say *It is finished* in *a loud voice* (p. 321; *ICC* 638). 29 *Vinegar* is the sour wine drunk by the soldiers. There is no mockery here as in Luke xxiii. 36. The potion is not the same as the drugged wine mercifully offered to criminals condemned to the cross (Mark xv. 23) which, it is stated, Jesus refused, because He wished to die in full use of His faculties.

They put a sponge full of vinegar upon hyssop. It is remarkable that no mention is made here, as in Mark xv. 36, of a reed or cane, on which the hyssop might be put. *Hyssop* is not a plant which could provide a stalk long enough or stout enough for the purpose. The probability is, however, that *hyssop* is not mentioned at all. Owing to a not infrequent mistake due to the tired or inadvertent eyes of scribes, two Greek letters have been repeated in the manuscript. In one eleventh century manuscript the reading is *hyssō perithentes.* Earlier manuscripts, written without any spaces between the words and in capital letters ('uncials'), read: HYSSŌ(PŌ)PERITHENTES, 'having put upon hyssop'. The bracketed letters are superfluous. The later manuscript, based upon a much older lost manuscript, suggests the true reading. *Hyssos* is the Greek name for a soldier's javelin (Latin *pilum*). Thus the words should read, 'put a sponge full of vinegar upon a javelin'. This is in accordance with Mark xv. 36, where, however, it is a bystander who does the kindly deed. In

the circumstances, however, a bystander is a much less likely benefactor. This unknown soldier must not be deprived of his merit.[1]

30 *It is finished.* Compare *knowing that all things are now finished* (*v.* 28). The words are not a cry of relief, but an utterance of victory. Jesus has *finished* the work given Him by the Father to do (iv. 34; v. 36; xvii. 4). It is the 'end of the beginning, not the beginning of the end', the final accomplishment of God's 'end' or purpose for the world.[2] *He bowed his head and gave up his spirit.* Note that in the Synoptic Gospels (Mark xv. 37; Matt. xxvii. 50; Luke xxiii. 46) Jesus is described as speaking 'in a loud voice'. Compare 'with a great voice', Deut. v. 22. The 'great' or 'loud' voice is the voice of God. It is notable that in the Synoptic Gospels Jesus is represented as speaking on the Cross with the accent of Divinity, and that this theological interpretation is absent in the Fourth Gospel, which elsewhere presents so marked a theological interpretation of the person of Jesus. Mark says that He *gave up the ghost* (lit. 'expired'). Luke adds the prayer: *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,* a citation from Ps. xxxi. 5. The Johannine words may be translated 'rendered up the spirit', and suggest merely that Jesus' death was voluntary. They may also imply that Jesus has now set free the Holy Spirit, of which (cf. xx. 22) it is said in vii. 39, *The Spirit was not yet (given), because Jesus was not yet glorified* (R.V.). (See p. 203.)

31 *That the bodies . . . high day.* The brutal practice of breaking the legs of crucified criminals was in order to hasten death. The Roman custom was to leave the bodies for the vultures. According to Jewish law, the body of a criminal must be removed before nightfall (Deut. xxi. 23). The

[1] Cf. Field, *Notes on the Translation of the New Testament,* pp. 106ff.; Bernard *ICC* II, p. 640.

[2] The following story is told of two Manchurian Christians who had been arrested. 'As they were being led to the prison, to the torture that they knew as certain and to the death that they feared, one of the two said to the other, "It's finished now," and he used a Chinese word that means "it's ended, it's over". At once the other replied, using the word that appears in the Mandarin translation of St. John xix. 30: "No! That is not what Jesus said when He suffered. He said, 'It is accomplished.'"' (T. R. Morton, *To-Day in Manchuria,* p. 80.)

Evangelist points out that it was desirable that the body should be removed as the next day was a Sabbath, which on this occasion coincides with the Passover (cf. Lev. xxiii. 7, 15). 33 When the soldiers came, Jesus is already dead. His death is not hastened by any human action (cf. pp. 231f.).

34 *There came out blood and water.* The incident of the spear-thrust has called forth a bewildering variety of interpretation (see the Commentaries). Burkitt's interpretation is at once the simplest and the most convincing. 'According to 1 John v. 6-8, the living personality has in it three elements, viz. spirit, water, blood. From the water we are begotten, by the blood we are sustained, and the spirit or breath is the immaterial element that enters at birth and leaves at death. The spirit quitted Jesus when He died (John xix. 30), leaving behind the water and blood of a human body, the existence of which was demonstrated to the onlookers by the spear-thrust of the soldier.'[1] Once more the reference is to the Docetic conception that the human body of Jesus was a phantom. On the contrary, the lance-thrust proves that in death it was a human corpse.[2] 35 The description is accompanied by a solemn asseveration. *He that hath seen hath borne witness and his witness is true; and he knoweth that he saith true.* The first 'he' refers to the Beloved Disciple, the second represents an emphatic demonstrative pronoun, and should be taken as referring to Christ Himself.[3] A similar reference of this emphatic pronoun (*ekeinos*) is found in iii. 28, 30; vii. 11; ix. 28; 1 John ii. 6; iii. 3, 5, 7, 16. The risen Christ bears witness through the Spirit to the truth that He came in the flesh and was truly man. Witness is also given by the Evangelist in *v.* 34. Thus the true humanity of Jesus is authenticated, as it should be, by three witnesses (cf. viii.

[1] *GHT*, p. 233; cf. Irenaeus, *Against Heretics* III. xxii. 2. It was a rabbinical conception that the human body is 'one half blood and the other half water'. SB II. 582f. For an account of the interpretations which connect the effusion with the two sacraments, see Hoskyns *FG*, pp. 635ff. See also J. E. Carpenter, *The Johannine Writings*, p. 461, n. 1.

[2] See the *Acts of John* 97, 101 (James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 228ff.).

[3] Another interpretation is that 'he' throughout refers to the eyewitness (i.e. the Beloved Disciple). Against this assumption is: (*a*) That an emphatic pronoun is used in the Greek. (*b*) The 'threefold witness' occurs elsewhere in the Gospel (viii. 13-18).

13-18).[1] 36 *That the Scripture might be fulfilled* (R.V.). On the Cross, Jesus symbolizes the Paschal lamb, of which it is said, *neither shall ye break a bone thereof* (Exod. xii. 46; Num. ix. 12). Another suggestion is that the reference is to Ps. xxxiv. 20. 'He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken,' spoken of the righteous man. But the primary reference must be to the Paschal Lamb which dominates the Evangelist's conception of the death of Jesus. 37 *They shall look on him whom they pierced* is cited from Zech. xii. 10, where the words occur in a Divine utterance foretelling repentance by the nation of their murder of some great leader. The passage belongs to Maccabean times. Some translate, 'they shall look to him' (cf. Rev. i. 7). Another reading is, 'They shall look unto me whom they pierced', implying that the crime was committed against God, Who is the Speaker. The text is somewhat uncertain. The 'look' has saving efficacy (cf. notes on iii. 14, 15). In Rev. i. 7 the reference is to the coming of Christ in judgment.

3. The Burial. xix. 38-42.

38 Joseph of Arimathea was, like Nicodemus (*v.* 39), a member of the Sanhedrin. If so, it required courage on the part of both to make their request, which is in contrast to any merely routine plans which the rest of the authorities may have had for the disposal of the body (*v.* 31).

39 A very large amount of ingredients is used, *about an hundred pound weight*. According to our scale, the weight would be 69 lb. The amount may be compared with the large quantity of wine at Cana (ii. 6 and notes). Compare also xii. 3, where it also stated that *the house was filled with the odour*, on account of the large amount of unguent used. In the Evangelist's eyes, this is a regal burial, the burial of the 'King of the Jews'. Compare the account of a regal burial in 2 Chron. xvi. 14.[2] The anointing of Mary is spoken

[1] On the medical evidence for the possibility of such an effusion, see Bernard *ICC* II. pp. 646ff.

[2] There is a rabbinic tradition that the proselyte Onkelos, on the occasion of the death of Gamaliel the Elder (A.D. 40-50), burned more than 80 pounds (about 55 lb.) of spices. In defence of his action, he quotes Jer. xxxiv. 5, adding: 'Is not Rabbi Gamaliel better than a hundred kings?' This

of as an anticipation of the embalming of His body (xii. 7). The tomb (*vv.* 41, 42) is hewn out of the limestone rock (Luke xxiii. 53),[1] and is chosen because it was near and there was no time to remove the body elsewhere before the Passover day began at 6 p.m.

41 *A new tomb, wherein was never man yet laid* (cf. Luke xxiii. 53) is fitting as the resting place of Him who first 'brought life and immortality to light through the gospel' (2 Tim. i. 10).

V. THE RESURRECTION NARRATIVE. xx. 1-29.

The Empty Grave. vv. 1-10.

2 *We know not.* The *we* includes Mary and the other disciples to whom she is speaking. 'I do not know, and since I do not know, you do not know either' (Schlatter). On the whole, this is better than to say that the plural assumes the tradition that Mary was accompanied by other women (Mark xvi. 1; Matt. xxviii. 1; Luke xxiv. 1, 10).

4 *The other disciple outran Peter.* A good many explanations, symbolic and otherwise, have been given of this verse (see Hoskyns, *op. cit.*). It is best to regard it as a simple vivid statement of fact. 5 *Stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen clothes lying, yet entered he not in* (R.V.). *Stooping and looking in* translates one Greek word, which can mean both 'stoop' and also 'look in'. The former meaning is rare. 'Looking in' is enough to render the meaning. The same word is used in the sense of 'looking in' in the Septuagint version of Gen. xxvi. 8, Prov. vii. 6, and elsewhere. Compare 1 Pet. i. 12. We should translate *looking in, he seeth*, etc. The fact that the Beloved Disciple did not enter at first, but subsequently entered (*v.* 8), is in order that his faith (*he saw and believed*) may stand out in contrast with Peter's 'beholding' (R.V.) the discarded grave-clothes without believing. The word translated *beholdeth* implies observation of the outward facts without drawing the conclusion that the Lord is

supports the suggestion that the 'royalty' of Jesus is in the Evangelist's mind. (SB II, p. 584; cf. Hoskyns *FG.*)

[1] See Art. 'Burial', Hastings *DB* I. 333.

risen. Mary and Peter both conclude that someone has taken away the body. The napkin binding the head has been *rolled up in a place by itself*, indicating no hurried snatching of the body. The Evangelist may have in view such a story as is reflected in Matt. xxvii. 64, xxviii. 13. 'For neither if any person had removed the body, would they before doing so have stripped it; nor, if any had stolen it, would they have taken the trouble to remove the napkin, roll it up, and lay it in a place by itself' (Chrysostom, quoted by Hoskyns).
8 Only the Beloved Disciple believes because of what he saw. *He saw and believed* that the body had not been removed by human hands, but that Jesus had risen from the dead. Yet even his belief was imperfect. 9 *As yet they knew not the scripture.* The words apply to both disciples. The *scripture* is Ps. xvi. 8-11. Neither of the two disciples had yet assimilated its meaning as a prophecy of the resurrection (cf. Mark xii. 24). Neither had as yet perceived that the resurrection of Jesus was the fulfilment of the eternal word and purpose of God, recorded in the scriptures. Even the Beloved Disciple, unlike Peter believing from what he saw in the tomb that Jesus was living, yet had no urge to proclaim the fact as a Divine 'gospel' for the world. 10 They both *went away again unto their own home.*

Psalm xvi was used as a proof scripture of God's power and purpose in the resurrection of Jesus regarded as a chief factor in the Christian gospel. It is an axiom of this Evangelist that only after the resurrection do the Scriptures illuminate the historical facts concerning Jesus. These record the eternal Divine purpose fulfilled in these events. Only through this new knowledge of the Scriptures were the disciples able to incorporate the historical facts concerning Jesus in their 'Gospel' or message of good news for the world.[1] With the illumination cast by the Scriptures, their message became the 'gospel of God' (Rom. i. 1), and the 'gospel of Jesus Christ'. The Scriptures are now seen to prophesy the Messianic age, not as conceived by the Jews, but as it dawned in the life,

[1] In 1 Cor. xv. 4 Paul says that part of the gospel message which he received from the Jerusalem community was that the facts of the burial and resurrection were 'according to the scriptures'.

death, and resurrection of the Son of God. In the sending of Jesus, God had brought to a climax His dealings with His chosen people in history.[1] Thoughts like these are in the mind of the Evangelist as he records that Peter and the Beloved Disciple *knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead* (cf. Luke xxiv. 46 and p. 260). The Gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus can only be preached with power when the disciples know that this Gospel is the fulfilment in history of God's eternal purpose, recorded in Scripture.

The story of the Empty Grave, as told in this gospel, is evidently again meant to antagonize Docetic conceptions. It emphasizes the fact that He who died and was buried is actually He who rose from the dead. The Docetist believed this also, but he derived from the spiritual body of the risen Christ the nature of His human body. 'The underlying principle of Docetism was that Christ before the Resurrection was of the same physical nature as the Christ after the Resurrection, and it started by regarding the latter as the norm.'[2]

The Docetics and their opponents alike began with the fact of the Risen Christ, and told the story of His human life from that standpoint. It would not therefore be remarkable if among the anti-Docetic thinkers, with their insistence on the reality of Jesus' human body, there was developed a tendency to materialize the conception of the Resurrection body of Jesus. This tendency is clearly demonstrated in Luke xxiv. 37-39. There are traces of the same tendency in this Johannine story of what was to be seen in the tomb. The actual body of flesh and blood was no longer there. It was the same body in which Jesus appeared to Mary. Yet it was transformed, so that at first Mary did not recognize Him. She is adjured not to cling to Him as though the abiding relationship with Him were to be one dependent on sense-perception. Paul speaks of a spiritual body for believers, modelled on Christ's resurrection body, but says that it is not the same body that was laid in the grave (1 Cor. xv. 16, 20, 37-38, 44, 50, 54). The Fourth Evangelist has a doctrine of Christ's spiritual body. Only after the Ascension does Christ become the object of Christian faith (*v.* 17) and the living Head of His body, the Church (ii. 20, 21). The Ascension of Jesus is described as taking place immediately after He spoke to Mary (see p. 328). After the Ascension, Jesus appears in a spiritual body. Yet when Jesus showed the

[1] Cf. C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching*, pp. 38ff., 214ff.
[2] Kirsopp Lake, *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, p. 222.

disciples *his hands and his side*, the Evangelist implies that the glorified body which could enter through closed doors (*v.* 19), still bore the marks of the wounds inflicted on the body of Jesus at His death (*v.* 20). The ascended Lord and the crucified Jesus are the same. The abiding religious value of the Evangelist's allusive, and, to our minds, somewhat bewildering manner of thought, is simply the belief that the Jesus of faith to-day is also the historic Jesus, who lived our human life, died our death, and rose again, thus bringing a firm assurance of victory and peace, based on historical fact, to all who are in Christ.

The Appearance to Mary. vv. 11-18.

11, 13 *She stooped down and looked into the tomb.* Translate as in *v.* 5. She is 'weeping', because what she had seen in the tomb had not kindled faith. *She beholdeth two angels in white.* These angels make no reply to Mary's complaint. They do not help her to believe in the resurrection as in Matt. xxviii. 5, 6. 13 *Woman, why weepest thou?* Mary's answer indicates that she still believes that someone has removed the body. 14, 15 Mary turned round and saw a figure whom she does not recognize as Jesus. She supposes him to be *the gardener*, who had charge of the tombs. He would know where the body was, if anyone. It is moving to note that her words imply that the *gardener* would also think only of Him, whose name she does not mention. *I will take him away.* She would not have Jesus buried in a nameless or dishonoured grave, as was at first the intention of the ecclesiastical authorities (xix. 31). 16 *Jesus saith unto her, Mary.* Mary is one who becomes convinced of the Resurrection by the ear, not by the eye. She hears Christ's voice calling *his own sheep by name.* Apparently she had turned away from the 'gardener', and was again looking into the grave. *She turned herself and saith . . . Rabboni,* 'My Master!' (cf. Mark x. 51, R.V.). In the Resurrection stories, Jesus does not merely appear to His disciples. He knows where to find them, and what to say or do so that they recognize Him. 17 *Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father.* The word for *touch* denotes a movement, not merely to touch an object, but to possess it; to 'attach oneself to' a person. 'Cling to me not' (cf. Matt. xxviii. 9). A distinction is made between the appearance of Christ immediately after the Resur-

rection, and His appearance later to the assembled disciples. In this Gospel the Ascension is regarded as taking place between this incident and the appearances recorded in *vv.* 19-23, 26-29 (cf. vi. 62 and notes). Not direct from the empty grave, but from the ' glory ' with the Father, Christ returns to reform the broken tie, and to bestow the Holy Spirit (*v.* 22; cf. xvii. 5). *I ascend unto my Father and your Father.* As often in this Gospel, the ' going to the Father ' is the full realization of His purpose in coming to earth, and enables Jesus to give to His disciples an abiding communion with God, and the new power represented by the Spirit (xiii. 1, 2; xvi. 5, 16, 28). The Ascension has, for this Evangelist, ceased to be conceived merely in spatial terms (Luke xxiv. 51; Acts i. 1-9). He thinks, in terms of the upper world of light, and the lower world of darkness or unbelief. Jesus is now the ladder between heaven and earth (cf. i. 51), inhabiting both worlds, and enabling men to enter into the upper world. The Ascension is the final departure of Jesus from the ordinary human life of men to be with the Father. Henceforth He holds communion with His Church by means of His *alter ego*, the Spirit. Yet this ascended Christ reigns in the heart of every believer. The Ascended Christ is the spiritual dynamic of believers. *Greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father* (xiv. 12). This is the source of the *joy* which He promises them (xiv. 28; cf. p. 303). *Your Father.* This is the only instance of the phrase in the Gospel. The disciples cannot say ' Our Father ' until Jesus has ascended. The relationship, which for Him is eternal and unbroken, is for them a new relationship, realized through Him. Therefore, *My Father and your Father.* The Evangelist uses different words for ' the Son ', and for men as ' children ' of God (i. 12). *Go unto my brethren.* The burden of the Christian message is the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, the latter a fact supernaturally, not naturally determined.[1]

The First Appearance to the Assembled Disciples. vv. 19-23.
19 *When the doors were shut . . . for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst.* Many a Christian congregation

[1] See p. 101.

worshipping in secret, with closed doors, in time of persecution, must have taken courage from these words. Cf. Matt. xviii. 20; xxviii. 20. 20 *Peace be unto you.* See note on xiv. 27. This *peace* is not at war with all the hard facts of life, but peace won by struggle with and victory over a hostile world. In factual witness of its reality, *he shewed them his hands and his side.* 21 *He breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Breathed* represents an act of creation (Gen. ii. 7). Jesus as the *Logos* is the instrument of a new spiritual creation, the Church, of which the assembled disciples are the nucleus.[1] 23 *Whose soever sins ye forgive they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained* (R.V.; cf. Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18). The Holy Spirit is, in the first instance, a gift to the community, and through membership in the community, the individual receives the Spirit. The solitary Christian is not contemplated in the New Testament (see on *v.* 24). The Spirit is the Spirit of forgiveness, and within the community men will forgive one another. Yet within that community, the *sin unto death* (1 John v. 16) is envisaged, and there are withered branches of the true Vine that must be removed (xv. 6). The thought of these verses carries us also to the mission of the Church in the world. Here is no mere sacerdotal conception. The words of *v.* 23 mean that to any disciple of Christ, every member of the Christian community who abides in closest communion with his Lord, who keeps his conscience pure and enlightened by knowledge of other Christian consciences and shares the faith and worship of the community, is given the last and final word on the sins of frail humanity; the last decisive and creative word for the removal of the wrongs of our tangled world; the last and decisive power of judgment on the great distinction between right and wrong. *Whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained*[2] (cf. Matt. xvi. 19;

[1] The company included more than the eleven. The Evangelist distinguishes the 'Twelve' in *v.* 24 from the general body of disciples.

[2] The Jewish rabbi was said to possess the power of 'binding' and 'loosing'. This means that his interpretation of what the Law lays down as right and wrong is final. This power is conferred on Peter as a typical Christian, and as representing the Church in Matt. xvi. 19. A similar idea appears in the use of the word 'retain' here. The Greek word might be thus paraphrased, 'to have the right to pass judgment upon'. The judg-

xviii. 18). It is a dangerous gift, fraught with grave responsibility, and only to be exercised by continuous dependence on the Spirit of Christ, working in and through His people.

The Appearance to Thomas. vv. 24-29.

The refusal of Thomas to share the conviction of the other disciples, does not separate him from their fellowship (*vv.* 25-26). Thomas is not a 'doubter' in the usual comprehensive sense. His personal loyalty to Jesus is unswerving, so that he will even die with Him (xi. 16). If he only knew where Jesus was going, he would follow Him (xiv. 5). Thomas is the type of those who demand tangible proofs and precise definitions of what they are expected to believe as Christians. To him Jesus meant everything. In company with Him, he was content. 'When that, out of which he drew his life, was taken away, he was bewildered and hardly knew where his conflicting feelings were hurrying him.'[1] He desires to be sure that the risen Christ is identical with the Jesus who was crucified, dead, and buried. His words in *v.* 25 show that the details of the crucifixion which he may have witnessed, stand out for him notorious among all the burning and desperate facts of life that seem to contradict the Christian faith. Thomas is right in insisting that for the validity of the Christian faith, the identity of the crucified and the risen Jesus must be established. This identity is triumphantly proclaimed in the Apostles' Creed on the basis of historical fact. The Fourth Evangelist writes his gospel in order to show that the filial consciousness of Jesus remains unbroken during His ministry, in face of unbelief, and in suffering and death itself (xix. 30). Thomas is also right in refusing to found upon the experience of others. Yet it is only as he shares that experience by entering into the fellowship of worship that he also receives the Holy Spirit conferred in *v.* 22. That he has received the gift

ment passed is regarded as the judgment of God. The judgment is moral judgment, and does not include the infliction of penalties. The possession of the Spirit implies the inculcation and preservation of Christian moral standards. Christ Himself, the giver of the Spirit, is the norm and pattern. Compare 'Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ' (1 Cor. xi. 1 R.V.). The Church must itself be prepared to accept the same standard.

[1] The words are taken from a remarkable study of the character of Thomas by A. B. Davidson, *The Called of God*, pp. 317ff.

is shown in his full personal confession of faith (*v.* 28). Confession of faith, in the apostolic Church, is always regarded as the work of the Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 3).

In this Gospel, the Spirit is conferred on the Church immediately after Jesus' final departure from the eyes of His disciples. Luke believes that the gift of the Holy Spirit was the beginning of the mission of the Church, but that it was not conferred until subsequently (Acts ii). The Church's message is described in Luke xxiv. 46, 47, but the power to declare it is not yet given. The disciples are to wait in Jerusalem *until they be clothed with power from on high* (xxiv. 49). Quite evidently the Fourth Evangelist possesses an independent tradition. It is impossible to discuss the truth of either conception on historical grounds. It is quite natural that divergent accounts should have come into being, regarding the date and manner of bestowing the gift of the Spirit which was the life of the Church. The really important thing to note is that the Spirit is nowhere conceived merely as an ecstatic experience, either in the primitive Church or in Paul's writings, or in this Gospel. Jesus Himself is always represented as conferring the Spirit, which must therefore bear the impress of His own character and teaching. So it is in xx. 22, 23. We may compare Acts ii. 33 (*He hath poured forth this which ye see and hear*); Gal. v. 22, where the fruits of the Spirit are aspects of the character of Jesus, coming to fruition in the character of the believer.

26 *After eight days.* The occasion is a meeting held one week after the Resurrection. The doors are again closed and Jesus appears with the salutation, *Peace be unto you.* 27 In the invitation to Thomas Jesus shows His Divine insight by clothing it in the very words used by Thomas to express his unbelief. He sympathetically understands such a state of mind. Note that Thomas does not touch the wounds. It was unnecessary. 'He rises at a single bound from the lowest depths of faith to its very pinnacle' (Godet). 28 *My Lord and my God.* Thomas utters a full Christian confession.[1] 'They

[1] The simple worship of the primitive Church may be reflected in certain aspects of the Thomas story. The service probably began with a benediction, in the form we find at the beginning of Paul's letters. 'Grace

met on a stated day,' says Pliny, describing Christian worship, 'before it was light, and addressed in turn an invocation to Christ, as to a divine being.'[1] In interpreting the words 'my God' as addressed to Jesus, we must bear in mind that the risen Jesus never usurps the place of God in New Testament thought. Note the subordination of Jesus to God so apparent in the thought of this Gospel (v. 19, xiv. 28, and also x. 30. See notes). In Paul's thought, the subordination is still true of the exalted Christ (1 Cor. xv. 28). It is God who confers the name 'Lord' on Christ (Phil. ii. 9), and gives Him equality in the experience of men. The new faith of Thomas is due to his knowledge that this is the same Christ, in whose company he had lived and had felt a new belief in God sprouting in his heart. Faith is not his own creation. He, too, now shares in the gift of the Spirit.

> In such access of mind, in such high hour
> of visitation from the living God,
> Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.[2]

29 *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* The beatitude is addressed to all those who belong to the Christian Church, and have not seen Jesus after His resurrection. Those of whom this was true, along with others to whom Jesus appeared, united to form the Christian Church of the New Testament. Their faith is enshrined in its pages. The Church's faith to-day is like a stream of molten lava, rising out of the burning hearts of those, of whom only some companied with Him who was dead and is alive for evermore. This fiery stream, miraculously, has not hardened into rock. We dare not think of the New Testament only as material for questions about the date or authorship or authenticity of particular books of the New Testament. The writers approached the facts from the standpoint of faith. We have no bare, unemotional, even uninterpreted facts about Jesus

be to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.' This would be followed by an invocation of Jesus ('Come, Lord Jesus', Rev. xxii. 17, 20), and a confession that He is Lord (1 Cor. xii. 3). Cf. T. M. Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry*, p. 44.

[1] Pliny, *Letters* x. 97.

[2] Cf. H. R. Mackintosh, *The Divine Initiative*, pp. 58ff.

Christ. Water resolved into its constituent elements of hydrogen and oxygen is useless for quenching thirst. We lay hold of the inner life of Jesus and of His own valuation of His mission and personality in the report that has come down to us from the earliest Christian brotherhood of faith.

> But paint a fire, it will not therefore burn.
> Light one in me, I'll find it food enough![1]

Postscript by the Author. *vv.* 30, 31. See pp. 38f.

VI. A SUPPLEMENT TO THE GOSPEL. xxi. 1-25.

Chapter xx. 30, 31 forms a fitting conclusion to chapters i–xx. We are therefore surprised to find yet another series of post-resurrection incidents recorded in chapter xxi. This time the scene is laid in Galilee, not in Jerusalem. Much has been written on the question whether this chapter is by the same hand that wrote the Gospel. There is no trace of any manuscript of the Gospel without this chapter. If therefore it is an addition to the Gospel, it must have been written very early. No conclusive evidence is to be obtained from examination of the vocabulary of the chapter. There are undoubtedly striking similarities of speech (Bernard *ICC* II. 687ff.; Hoskyns, *FG* II. 672; Howard *FGRC* 255ff.), but these are offset by an equally remarkable list of words and expressions not found in the Gospel (Moffatt, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 3rd edition, p. 572). The view that the chapter is an integral part of the original Gospel is supported by the late Canon Streeter (*The Four Gospels*, pp. 371-381). His position is that the Gospel was originally designed to end with the concluding verses of chapter xx, and that chapter xxi is of the nature of an afterthought. He does not entirely exclude the possibility that the chapter is the work of 'a pupil of the author saturated in his master's spirit'. Yet 'satur-

[1] R. Browning, *Bishop Blougram's Apology*.

ated' is a somewhat exaggerated term to use. Most readers of the Gospel, even in English, must feel instinctively certain differences of style and outlook in this chapter as compared with the rest of the Gospel. Moreover, xxi. 14 suggests the touch of someone who is adding a *third* appearance to the disciples, following on those recorded in the previous chapter. The list of apostles in xxi. 2 strikes one as having been collected from the preceding chapters. In addition, if this closing chapter is by the author of the Gospel, it is clearly necessary to exclude from his work verses 24, 25 (see notes). No convincing arguments have been brought forward, in my opinion, sufficient to discredit the hypothesis that this chapter is a very early addition to the Gospel, by an unknown author. The purposes he has in view in so doing will be suggested in the commentary that follows.

The Miraculous Draught of Fish. vv. 1-14.

1 *At the sea of Tiberias.* This resurrection appearance takes place in Galilee, whilst those recorded in chapter xx are in Jerusalem. There are two lines of tradition in the Gospels regarding the place of the resurrection appearances. According to the Marcan tradition (Mark xiv. 28; xvi. 7; Matt. xxviii. 7), Jesus promises to meet the disciples in Galilee (cf. Matt. xxviii. 16). No appearances in Galilee are recorded by Luke, or in John xx, and no mention is made of this possibility. It has been conjectured that Matt. xxviii. 16, as well as John xxi. 1-14, are founded on the lost ending of Mark's Gospel.[1] In this chapter we have a version of the Galilean tradition. Did Jesus appear both in Jerusalem and in Galilee?[2] The author of the Appendix regards the Galilean appearance as subsequent to those in Jerusalem (*v.* 14). In all probability one purpose of the author of the Appendix was to ensure that the Galilean tradition has its place alongside the other in an authoritative Gospel. The tradition that Peter and other disciples returned to their fishing on the Lake of Galilee in dejection, even after the woman had found the tomb empty,

[1] See B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, chapter xii, on the problem of Mark's lost ending.

[2] Cf. Streeter, *op. cit.*, p. 473; Bernard, *Commentary* II, pp. 656, 691f.

appears in the apocryphal fragmentary *Gospel of Peter* (second century A.D.).[1]

3 *I go a fishing. . . . We also come with thee* (R.V.). There is no suggestion here that the disciples, despairingly, had turned again to their former occupation. Hoskyns supports the hypothesis that xxi is by the Evangelist, by saying that 'the scene is one of complete apostasy, and is the fulfilment of xvi. 32'. Compare Mark xiv. 50. If this be the intention, however, there would emerge an additional argument against the common authorship of the Appendix and the Gospel. In the latter it is expressly stated that the disciples are free to go away, on the request of Jesus (xviii. 8, 9). Also Peter and another disciple follow Him to the high priest's house, and the Beloved Disciple is present at the Cross. It is much more probable that the writer is making use of the story of a Galilean appearance in order to symbolize the work of the apostolic Church. The conception of the apostles as 'fishers of men' appears in Mark i. 17; Matt. iv. 19; Luke v. 10. Peter is the leader, and it is at his suggestion that they go. Failure comes. *That night they caught nothing.* 4 With the dawn, Jesus appears on the shore, but they did not recognize Him. 5 His question, *Children, have ye any meat?* is better translated, 'Lads, have ye any fish?' 6 He commands them to *cast the net on the right side of the boat* (R.V.). The result is a catch so large that they cannot drag the net ashore. The *right side* recalls Ezek. xlvii. 1, 2, the vision of the waters issuing from the 'right side' of the Temple. The draught is also reminiscent of Ezek. xlvii. 10, the picture of fishers in these waters. 'Their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.' 11 The actual number of fish caught is mentioned, *a hundred and fifty and three.* Jerome in his commentary on Ezek. xlvii. 9-12, says that according to zoologists of his day, a hundred and fifty-three represents all known species of fish. If this is in the mind of the Evangelist also, the number symbolizes the universal humanity which is the goal of the Apostolic mission[2]

[1] M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 94.

[2] As against this it has been pointed out that the fish are regarded as *edible* (*v.* 10), and it is also suggested that the number merely indicates a

(cf. Matt. xiii. 47). *Yet was not the net broken.* This would signify that the Church's resources, with Christ in its midst, are never overstrained.

These points also deserve to be noted:

(1) The whole story invites comparison with the narrative in Luke v. 1-11, where a similar tradition appears in a somewhat different form. Some suggest that Luke has incorporated a post-resurrection tradition in his narrative, as a description of the call of the disciples. Certainly Peter's words, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,* sound more appropriate at a more advanced stage of the ministry than at the very beginning of his discipleship. It is now an accepted result of New Testament criticism ('Form-criticism')[1] that the form of the New Testament stories has been moulded by the uses, homiletical and catechetical, to which they had been put, before they were written down and incorporated in the various gospels.[1] It will be noticed that in the Lucan story the nets were breaking under the strain (v. 6), in contrast with xxi. 11. In both narratives the night fishing has been without result. Success comes with the appearance of Jesus.

(2) The meal described in *vv.* 12, 13, is not a Eucharist. '*Prima facie*, the story suggests that the fish on the fire (*v.* 9) was for the breakfast of Jesus Himself, and that He now invites the fishermen to bring some of the fish that they had caught, to cook them, and join Him at His meal' (Bernard). If the meal is an ordinary one, the conception of our Lord's Resurrection body recalls Luke xxiv. 41-43 and Acts x. 41.[2]

The Restoration of Peter. vv. 15-19.

The writer evidently feels that the Gospel has left the position of Peter, after his denial, somewhat uncertain, in spite of xiii. 6-10, and the statement that his denial is foreseen by Jesus (xiii. 38). He has also in view the tradition preserved in Mark xvi. 7, that Jesus appeared to Peter, in some special way, in Galilee. The story is cast in the form of a threefold questioning and a threefold answering, corresponding to Peter's threefold denial.

fisherman's accurate memory of his catches. It is, however, characteristic of symbolism of this kind, that it inevitably breaks down at certain points.

[1] Vincent Taylor *FGT*; E. F. Scott, *Validity of the Gospel Tradition.*

[2] E. C. Hoskyns (*op. cit.*, pp. 66off.) interprets the meal as eucharistic.

15 *Lovest thou me more than these? The word translated* 'love' represents two different words (*phileō, agapaō*) in the Greek throughout the narrative. Attempts have been made to draw a distinction of meaning between them.[1] Although a distinction is made between the words in classical Greek, none can here be sustained. Both words are used of *the disciple whom Jesus loved*, and are elsewhere interchangeable.[2] The Syriac versions of this passage also use the same word in translation, although different Syriac words are available. Also the Greek Septuagint uses both words indifferently to translate the Hebrew word 'love' (*āhab*). Similarly, two different words are used for *feed* (*vv.* 15, 16 ('tend', R.V.), 17), but again this seems to be but a stylistic variation. Also the distinction of words, *lambs, sheep*, in these verses, does not discriminate between younger and older members of the flock, but is again purely stylistic. In 1 John ii. 12-14, the term *little children* includes both *fathers* and *young men*. It is merely an intimate form of address used by teachers to pupils. *More than these.* 'These' has been taken to refer to the boats and nets. Much more probably the reference is to Peter's superior protestations recorded in Mark xiv. 29; Luke xxii. 33; John xiii. 37.

18 *When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself . . . and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.* The words contain a prophecy of the martyrdom of Peter. There is a reference to the brisk fashion in which Peter, the young man, had 'girded himself' to plunge into the sea (*v.* 7). 19 The words *Follow me* have a pregnant meaning. In Mark viii. 34 there is a word-play on *follow me*. They mean (1) 'be my disciple'; (2) 'follow me on my road to suffering'.[3] *Follow me*, addressed here to Peter, contains a promise of his martyrdom (see notes on xiii. 37), which took place at Rome about A.D. 64. *Thou shalt stretch forth thy hands and another shall gird thee* (R.V.), suggests crucifixion as the *manner of death* (R.V.; cf. xii. 33; xviii. 32). Here Jesus is represented, not as distrusting Peter's finest impulses, but as deepening and strengthening

[1] Abbott, *Johannine Vocabulary*, pp. 1ff.; Westcott, *Commentary*.
[2] See the note in Bernard *ICC* II, pp. 702ff.
[3] A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 115.

them. Impulse and feeling will harden into a settled conviction and purpose that will enable him to be 'faithful unto death'.

The Future of the Beloved Disciple. vv. 20-23.

20 *Peter . . . seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following.* Peter asks a question about the destiny of his fellow disciple. 21 *And what shall this man do?* ('And this man, what?' R.V.m.) The reply is difficult to interpret, but is evidently meant as a rebuke to Peter; *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.* Why Peter should be rebuked is not made clear. It may be that he is rebuked because he asks a question which touches the faithfulness of one who has earned the title of Beloved Disciple, and was in a position of honour at the Supper. These qualifications are recorded in *v.* 20. In that case, the core of Jesus' reply is in the word *tarry*. He says that even if it should be His will that the Beloved Disciple should escape death, and be alive at His final advent, that would not place him on a lower level than that which belongs to martyrdom. The same thought appears in Mark x. 39, 40. There James and John are told that willingness for martyrdom, and even martyrdom itself, will not ensure the highest places in the kingdom. That is for God alone to decide. Apparently Jesus' words had been misinterpreted in the Church. 23 The expectation prevailed *among the brethren*, i.e. among the members of the Church, *that that disciple should not die.* The name brethren is frequently applied to Church members in Acts.[1]

The particular difficulty here suggested is that the Beloved Disciple has already died before the Lord's return.[2] It arose in an environment where the hope of a speedy advent of Jesus was still held.[3] The writer of the Appendix, by a subtle interpretation of Jesus' words, tries to explain the perplexity created by the death of the Apostle before the Lord's return. Jesus, he means, did *not* say that he would be alive at His coming, but that he might *tarry till I come*, if He so willed it. *Tarry*

[1] Cf. H. J. Cadbury, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, V, pp. 378f.
[2] On the death of John the Apostle, see pp. 88f.
[3] See Streeter *FGG*, pp. 474ff.

is the translation of a word frequently used in the Gospel, and translated 'abide' (*menein*). It is used in a local, but far more frequently in a spiritual sense, of the abiding presence of Christ, or of the abiding communion of the believer with Christ. The meaning may be that, 'In the teaching of the knowledge imparted by him to the Church, he would abide as the quickener of that faith and love through which Jesus would come into his followers' hearts.'[1] Such an interpretation would denote that the writer of the Appendix had assimilated deeply the Johannine teaching, and himself belonged to the Johannine school of thought.

Postscript. vv. 24, 25.

24 *This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things and wrote these things.* It is quite obvious that verse 24 could not have been written by the author of the Gospel. Verses 23-25 are comments by the writer of chapter xxi. In verse 24, *these things* may be taken to refer (*a*) to what is recorded in verses 15-22; or (*b*) to all that is recorded in the Gospel itself. If (*b*) is accepted, we would have here the earliest recorded assertion of the apostolic authorship of the Gospel. Bernard (*ICC* II, p. 713) insists that the meaning is that the Beloved Disciple *wrote* the Gospel, only in the same sense as Pilate *wrote a title and put it on the Cross* (xix. 19). But undoubtedly Pilate took pains to see that the inscription was actually written by his subordinates in the very words he himself ordained. This analogy does not solve the problem. If, on the other hand, we come to the conclusion on other grounds, as we must, that the Beloved Disciple is not the author of the Gospel, we are driven to accept the former interpretation, and to take *these things* as referring to the story recorded in verses 15-22. That story is claimed as an additional piece of authentic Johannine tradition, regarding Peter's restoration to a leading place in the Church. The Gospel itself last mentions him, after the resurrection, as having gone back to his own home, after seeing the empty grave, and without belief that Jesus is risen (p. 325). This impression of one who

[1] J. E. Carpenter, *The Johannine Writings*, p. 250. Carpenter's whole study of this chapter is very suggestive.

became a leader in the Church is now supplemented. The writer holds the balance between Peter and the Beloved Disciple, by pointing out the real meaning of Jesus' promise to the latter recorded in verse 22. This disciple is dead, which is contrary to the usual interpretation of certain words of Jesus. The writer also gives to the Beloved Disciple the place given him in the Church by Jesus. The words meant that he would 'remain' as an abiding spiritual influence (see on *v.* 23). The writer is not concerned to exalt the one disciple over the other, but chiefly to show that Christ's promise to *both* came true (see on *v.* 25). The facts come from the Beloved Disciple himself, *who beareth witness of these things* and had also made a written record of them. The 'we' in *we know that his witness is true,* is best taken as a testimony from members of a community in Ephesus who revered the memory of their beloved teacher.

25 The tone of verse 25 shows that the writer's reverence for Jesus dominates his mind in what he has just said. As has just been pointed out, he is more concerned to establish the faithfulness of Christ's promise to both disciples, than with the pre-eminence of either disciple. The writer says that both the Petrine and Johannine traditions might be vastly supplemented! The words of verse 25 are hyperbolically expressed, but are they not an amazingly apt remark at the close of the last of the four Gospels? The verse took deep hold on the mind of Origen, who refers to it several times. The words may be translated, 'the world would not have room for the books'. In one place, Origen interprets this as meaning that not only 'books' but even the 'world' would be unable to 'find room for' a full expression of the acts and purposes of the Logos-Christ[1] (cf. xiv. 12). In a very real sense, Origen is right in his interpretation. *The things which Jesus did* are not to be interpreted exclusively as the events and sayings of the historic Jesus. 'Law may be put into writing, but Grace and Truth cannot' (Abbott. Compare John i. 16, 17). The Jesus of history is the Jesus of all history since His coming. The 'gesta Christi', the achievements of Christ, are not yet ended.

[1] See Abbott, *Johannine Grammar*, pp. 304ff.

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